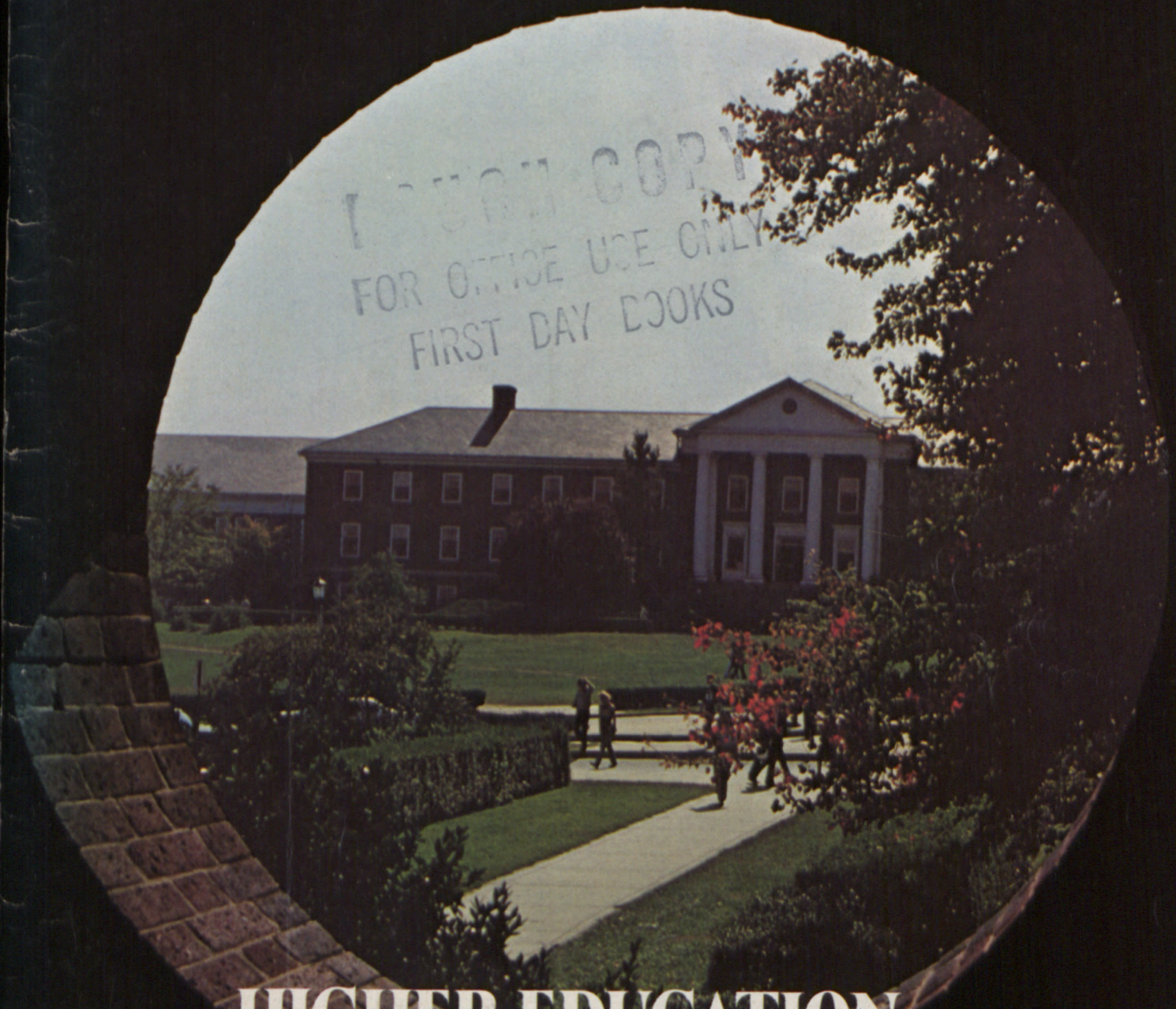
The Journal of the NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

TODAY'S EDUCATION

November-December 1976



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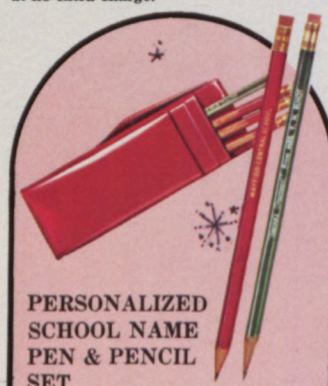

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IN THIS ISSUE

Our cover photo of the beautiful Maryland University campus symbolizes NEA's increasing attention to higher education. The photo also serves as a lead-in to a significant statement on higher education issued by the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Referring to the present "negativism" toward higher education throughout the country, Carnegie President Alan Pifer in his article titled "Higher Education Today and Tomorrow" suggests ways of "building a new consensus about the place of higher education in our national life." This enormous task may not succeed, he adds, and "if it does not, it will not be higher education alone but the entire nation that will be at risk."

After acknowledging higher education's "evident faults and the demonstrable case for reform," President Pifer points out ways "in which higher education's varied functions affect virtually every aspect of the nation's welfare. . . . Loss of public confidence in higher education is therefore nothing short of a national tragedy." He then outlines two possible futures for higher education in the United States.

• Turning from the problems of higher education to the problems of teaching high school students, we proudly present Bel Kaufman, teacher, writer, and author of the long-time best-seller, *Up the Down Staircase*. She tells about "Where Every Child Is Special"—the School of Performing Arts in New York City.

"The students at P.A. are treated as valuable people. Their potential is discovered and nurtured. Their needs are met. Their individuality is fostered. Their talents are developed. They are respected for what they are and what they could become."

And P.A. says, according to the author, "that every child is special and that to develop the potential of each, whatever that potential may be, is the highest aim of education."

Bel Kaufman is special too. Aside from her best-selling book and other writing, she has written several articles for *Today's Education* over the past few years. Last year her *Today's Education* article, "Letter to a Dead Teacher," won an award from the Educational Press Association and was reprinted by *Reader's Digest* and *Education Digest*. We think "Where Every Child Is Special" should win similar honors.

• Wilhelm Ebert is a very special person, also. He is president of the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession and president of the Bavarian Teachers Association. In August, he presided over the WCOTP's annual assembly. About 600 of the world's top teacher-leaders from nearly 80 nations and from every continent attended the Washington meeting.

In his article, "World Teacher Power," President Ebert reports that "teachers' organizations throughout the world demand the right to collective bargaining and to determine the conditions of service of their members. They seek this not out of self-interest but in the belief that unless teachers are satisfied and economically secure, they will not be able to take their professional part in the society of today."

• Another special person in this issue is Ruby Murchison, National Teacher of the Year, whose article is entitled "The Teacher of the Year Reminisces." Sponsored by the *Ladies' Home Journal*, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and the Council of Chief State School Officers, the annual award is given to a classroom teacher chosen from the 50 or more state and territorial winners by a panel of judges representing a dozen educational organizations. Ms. Murchison is a seventh grade teacher of language arts and social studies in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

In her article, she tells of some of her experiences in elementary and secondary classrooms and of lessons *she* learned. For example: "I learned the necessity of clearly defining what I expected students to learn and at what level. I also learned that I had to help them individually and that I had to proceed at a pace commensurate with their abilities, needs, interests, and learning styles. . . . I became convinced that what goes on in the classroom must focus first on students, then on subject matter."

• As for special *features* in this issue, we present two: (1) a special feature of eight pages on "Some Popular Pastimes" and (2) a special feature of seven pages on "Teacher Instructional Needs Assessment."

(1) "Some Popular Pastimes" discusses some new crazes of some teenagers—and some older folks too: wilderness skills, handcrafts, and mini and trail biking. Why are such topics relevant for our magazine? Because teachers want to know as much as possible about young people's interests and activities in order to understand their students better.

Authors of the three articles in the feature are experts on the three topics. They are Jane Meiklejohn-Moz, John Coyne, and James Sparks. (If you don't recognize those names, some of your students will!)

(2) "Teacher Instructional Needs Assessment" tells of the NEA's latest national survey to determine what classroom teachers need to help them do an even better job of teaching. A second part of the feature, titled "If It Isn't Local, It Isn't Real," specifically discusses many local surveys and their constructive results.

As this month's cover announces, this issue contains many other articles and continuing features at every educational level. And this month for the first time, we are printing a Puerto Rican edition with a special insert in Spanish. If you receive a copy of that edition: ¡Qué les guste la lectura! If you receive a copy of the regular edition, happy reading!

—WAG.

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DESIGN BY JAMES J. FISHER
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The Journal of the NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

TODAY'S EDUCATION

PART OF NEA'S PROGRAM FOR PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE

November-December 1976, Volume 65, Number 4

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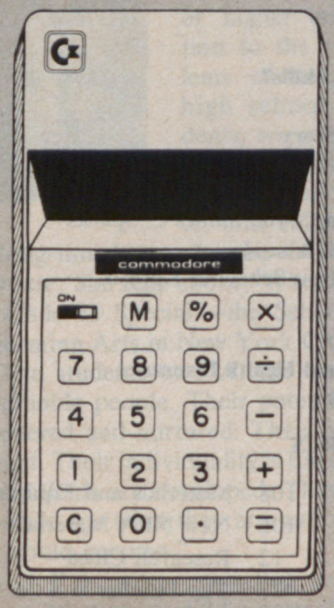

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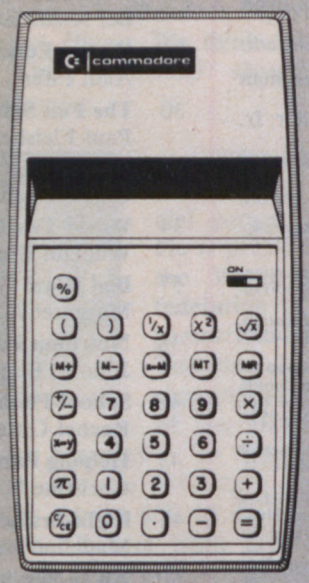

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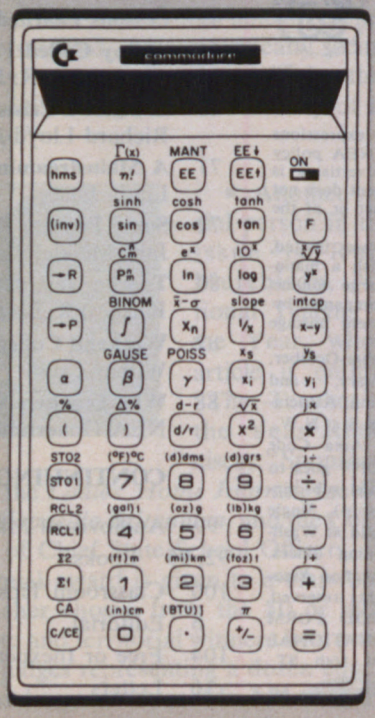

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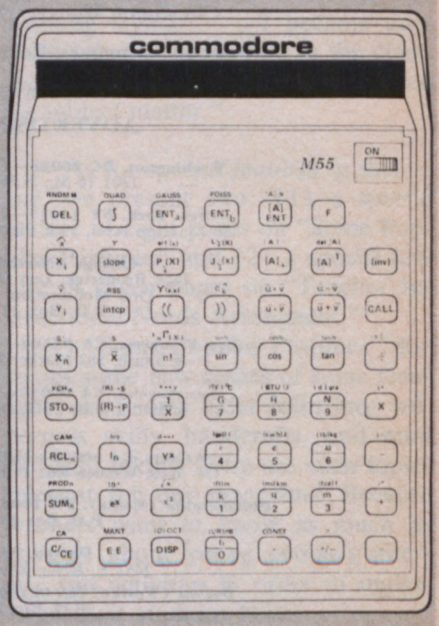

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EDITORIAL

Collective Bargaining

By **TERRY HERNDON**
NEA Executive Director.

A guaranteed right for teachers across the nation to negotiate equitably with their boards would be a bargain for students and society as well as for teachers. This basic but frequently submerged fact—that collective bargaining buttresses quality education—must be demonstrated to government officials, parents of students, and the general public. A concerted teacher front on this issue is important at this time. Many locals are struggling to get their initial chance at the bargaining table or to move up to something better than "Meet, Confer—and Forget," and some state associations are laboring to get a collective bargaining statute—or to preserve from attack the laws they already have.

The recent U.S. Supreme Court decision in *National League of Cities* v. *Usery* dimmed our immediate prospects for a federal bargaining law. But in no way did it dim our determination that all teachers shall know the freedom, the equity, the justice, and the dignity that only the collective bargaining relationship can give them.

A federal statute will remain a long-range goal while we make a mighty push for a nationwide pattern of strong, effective state laws to replace the present pitiful patchwork system that leaves many teachers without a voice and throngs of others with a mere whisper. This fall's scourge of strikes suggests that a meaningful negotiation system holds the only good hope for future stability in teacher-board relationships.

It is obvious that collective bargaining legislation is a key to improving the economic status of teachers. What is less obvious to the public, however, is that it is also a key to improving education. But there is an image problem here, for salary and other teacher "welfare" items often attract public attention to the virtual exclusion of other contract issues, and people outside the profession commonly fail to relate adequate pay to good education. Teachers, of course, fully understand that reasonable salary schedules are the foundation for a satisfied, stable profession capable of delivering quality education.

Nine years ago an article in this magazine declared that professional negotiation laws "can do more for the improvement of instruction than anything else that has happened in American schooling in 100 years, including Sputnik." Later, an Associated Press education writer stated that "increasingly [teachers] are striking over issues tied to their professional standing and the improvement of education."

What the profession insists on is that teachers have a say in educational decision making. Teachers do not want to run the whole show, but they do want to assume their legitimate role. It is they who will put most policies into practice.

Teachers want some say-so about what is taught, how it is taught, and how the learning process is evaluated. If they are to be "accountable," they want accompanying authority. They demand a vital watchdog position, too—for example, the chance to ward off increases in class size under the false banner of economy. Only through collective bargaining can such continuing roles be guaranteed.

Too many public employees are still denied the full bargaining rights that private employees have had for 40 years. Decisions continue to be handed down from on high by paternalistic officials, many of whom are long out-of-touch—or have never been in touch—with the classroom. We can subscribe to public service but not to public servitude. When teachers reject untenable conditions, when they demand the right to share in decision making that determines the quality of education, they are being "professional" in the highest sense. In no way are they indicating less commitment to children.

Collective bargaining brings an urgently needed balance of power to problem-solving procedures. It provides a uniform process, including a framework for fairness, ground rules that can lead to mutual trust, a way for resolving impasses.

The ultimate response to impasses—the strike—is not likely to disappear completely even with 50 effective state laws or, indeed, a federal law. On the other hand, the lack of such legislation will continue to foster strikes.

Only a nationwide pattern of enforceable state laws—bolstered someday, we hope, by a sweeping federal law—can achieve collective bargaining without chaos. NEA is pursuing that priority goal with the confidence of a powerful, independent organization free of obligations to any other group. The 1976-77 budget includes a half million dollars earmarked specifically "to assist in legislation and negotiation of instructional issues" and related efforts.

In this effort, the Association is cooperating with others in quest of similar goals. In the Coalition of American Public Employees, the NEA has found excellent opportunities to combine *cooperation* and *independence*. At the national and state levels, the Coalition serves as a bridge for common interests. It offers an organized voice, which today is speaking out firmly for collective bargaining.

Organizations, though, are people. Each teacher can use his or her influence to help make collective bargaining for teachers possible all over the country. Teachers and students and the general public will reap the dividends. □

TRENDS

NEA Endorses Presidential Slate

For the first time in its history, the NEA this year endorsed a candidate for President of the United States—Democrat Jimmy Carter, with his running mate Walter Mondale. Nearly 7,000 delegates to NEA's 1976 Representative Assembly returned ballots, and 81 percent of them voted to endorse the Carter-Mondale ticket.

(For a full description of the endorsement, refer to the October issue of the NEA Reporter.)

Parents Cite Societal Causes for Test Score Declines

Parents of public school children most often cite societal causes rather than school-related ones for the nationwide drop in achievement test scores. They choose less parent attention, concern, and supervision of the child; lack of student motivation; too much TV; and societal permissiveness as the most likely causes. These are among the findings of the 1976 Annual Survey of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, sponsored by the Gallup Poll and the Kettering Foundation.

To improve the situation, three-fourths of parents were willing to take courses on how to help their children succeed in school. Among all respondents, nine-tenths said they'd serve on a citizen advisory committee to help the school board with school problems.

Basic skills, moral development, and career education were areas respondents thought the schools should stress. They also recommended stricter discipline, meeting students' individual needs, and improving parent-school relations. The idea of requiring a nationwide exam for a high school diploma got the approval of 65 percent of respondents.

National Assessment Reports on Second Reading Assessment

Nine-year-olds read better in 1975 than in 1971, says the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), and 17-year-olds have gotten slightly better at reading everyday items like bills and instructions. The average percentage of Black nine-year-olds who correctly answered reading items increased by 4.8 percentage points, that of their white counterparts by 1.2 points (although the white children still score higher).

Like NAEP science and writing results, says an NAEP staff member, these scores show special programs are paying off. Students still don't show measurable improvement in drawing inferences and solving problems on the basis of what they read, however.

(*Today's Education* notes other findings of the National Assessment program from time to time. In an article beginning on p. 69, Richard Lloyd-Jones discusses the NAEP results in writing.)

School Factors Can Raise Reading Scores

High levels of parent-teacher contacts; teachers trained to use individualized materials; teachers flexible in modifying instructional approaches; frequent informal consultations among teachers; teachers with high morale; orderly classrooms—all these seem to raise reading scores of Black students in disadvantaged neighborhoods, say Rand Corporation researchers. Individual school and classroom approaches made a difference to Chicano students, although the researchers haven't yet isolated the specific factors involved.

Studying schools in disadvantaged Black and Chicano areas in Los Angeles, the team found that a combination of the most effective school and classroom factors they could identify would add seven points to the reading scores of an average Black or Chicano sixth grader, bringing that child from the twenty-ninth to the forty-first percentile.

School and College Enrollment Starts Decline

Total school and college enrollment this fall is estimated to be about 100,000 lower than last year's all-time high of 60.2 million, says the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. A drop of about 500,000—more than 1 percent—in grades K-8 was only partly offset by a slight rise of 40,000 in high school enrollment and an increase of about 400,000 in college enrollment. College enrollment is expected to continue rising until the early 1980's.

Despite the drop in number of students, about 3 in every 10 people in the United States are in school, as students, teachers or other instructional staff, or administrators.

State and Local Employees Join Labor Groups

In 1974, employees of independent school districts were more likely to belong to employee labor organizations than any other group of full-time state and local government employees, reports the Census Bureau. Nearly 67 percent of all school district staff, 76 percent of teachers, were organized.

Membership of all full-time state and local government employees in employee labor organizations rose 10 percent between 1972 and 1974. By 1974, it had reached 51.5 percent of all such employees.

Schools Hit by Disaster Can Get Federal Help

Now, through the Office of Education, state governors can get help for schools hit by "pinpoint" disasters. (Storm, flood, hurricane, earthquake, and fire are classified as pinpoint disasters when they're local in effect and not severe enough to merit federal major disaster aid and when the damage isn't due to negligence or malice.)

The Office of Education can provide loans to rebuild seriously damaged or destroyed school facilities and grants to replace lost revenue or to cover increased operating expenses or pay for necessary minor repairs or replacements for supplies and equipment.

Illinois Starts Bilingual Education in 24 Languages

Starting this year, the state of Illinois plans to provide 35,000 public school students with bilingual education, offering a program wherever 20 pupils with limited English fluency in one school speak the same language. Finnish, Assyrian, and Farsi are among the 24 languages concerned. The Illinois programs will provide at least 90 minutes' daily instruction in the students' mother tongues for three years while they develop fluency in English. →

About 1.4 million people in the United States between the ages of six and 17 usually speak a language other than English, according to the Census Bureau, and about 45 percent of them have difficulty speaking and understanding English.

Interstate Certification Agreement Now Includes 33 States and DC

Michigan is the thirty-third state to join the Interstate Agreement on the Qualifications of Education Personnel. Teachers—and also administrators, support personnel, and vocational educators—certified in one of the participating states can get their certification recognized in the others.

Who Is "the" Public School Teacher?

Someone who has taught for 11 years, nine of them in the same system, says NEA Research, citing summary information based on 1975-76 data. The average public school teacher earns $12,145.

Elementary teachers are likely to have 26 pupils in their classes; secondary teachers, 131 students a day in five class periods. Only 1.1 percent of classroom teachers now lack a bachelor's degree.

Nontraditional Learning Gets College Credit

In eight years of existence, the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) has tested 300,000 civilians and 1.2 million members of the armed forces, reports the College Board. About 1,800 colleges and universities give college credit on the basis of CLEP results. Institutions that have done follow-up studies found that subsequent grades of students given credits on the basis of CLEP scores were equal to or better than those of others.

Grants Program Seeks To Attract Women to Science

National Science Foundation grants will support not only science career workshops for women at postsecondary levels but science career facilitation projects in 10 states and the District of Columbia this year. The facilitation projects are to serve about 350 women who got science degrees between 1961 and 1974 and are not now working in their degree fields.

More Veterans Take Advantage of Current GI Bill

The Veterans Administration says 63.4 percent of Vietnam-era veterans have taken advantage of the current 10-year-old GI Bill; 43.4 percent of Korean War and 50.5 percent of World War II veterans used the earlier versions of the Bill. In fiscal 1976, 2.8 million people were enrolled under the Bill.

A study for the Defense Department estimated that without the Bill, high school graduates' enlistment would drop by 15 percent, thus affecting the educational composition of the armed forces, particularly the Army.

Youth Unemployment Rose Sharply in 1975

In the year ending in October 1975, the unemployment rate for people aged 16 to 24 who weren't in school increased from 11 to 15 percent, according to a recent report by the U. S. Department of Labor. The unemployment rate for college graduates increased but remained the lowest of all youth groups. High school graduates not in college were both more likely to be in the labor force and less likely to be unemployed than dropouts.

Education Is Not Property, Court Rules

"We find no authority to consider education as a property item . . . capable of division," announced the Colorado Court of Appeals, ruling on division of property in a divorce case. The Court thus reversed a district court decision that had awarded a wife $33,134 as her share of her husband's master's degree in business administration. An expert had set the degree's total value at $82,836.

High Schools Should Ease Transition to Adulthood, Say Policymakers

Treat students more like adults and give them education related to their present lives, involve the community in the school's daily activities, allow flexible enrollment for students over compulsory school age, treat values education as basic—so say participants in a conference on secondary schools sponsored by the U.S. Office of Education and the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Together, says the conference report, these changes should make the transition to adulthood easier for young people.

Employment Grows More Common Among Mature Women

In 1975, more than a third of women 45 or older were in the labor force —far more than in 1950, says the U.S. Department of Labor's Women's Bureau. Married women especially are more likely than before to go back to work, although the difficulties of returning after years of absence mean that they're still less likely to be working than their counterparts who are no longer married. Mature women are more likely than younger women to be operators, managers, and administrators, and mature women are less likely to be in professional, technical, or clerical work.

U.S. Public Stays in School Longer Now

More than half the workers in 17 of the 20 basic job categories now have high school diplomas, says the Census Bureau. In 1950 a third of all adults had finished high school as their highest level of preparation; now, two-thirds have.

The proportion of adults in the labor force with at least four years of college also has doubled since 1950—from 1 in 14 to 1 in 7. These changes may have implications for productivity, mobility, job expectations, and consumer spending patterns, the Bureau notes.

PHOTO CREDITS
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by Francis Gemme

Francis Gemme, a Founder of the Institute of Children's Literature, is the President and Publisher of *Gallery Books* and former President of Young Reader's Press.

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This course will train you step-by-step from the writing of the opening sentence through the polishing of a finished manuscript. Yes, you will have completed a manuscript suitable for submission to a publisher when you finish this course.

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While there are no promises, many writers of children's books report earning $10,000 to $15,000 a year and more. In addition, the benefits of a career in writing also include the challenge, the excitement, and the great satisfaction of doing something important with your life. When you complete this course, you will be a trained writer with a future. And what a future!

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Last year, more than 30 million children's books were published, producing total sales of over 170 million dollars! And over 250 periodicals for children with a combined circulation of over 60,000,000 were published. Books and magazine articles for children are frequently adapted for television and for the movies. In addition, there are twenty-six children's book clubs and a rapidly expanding children's paperback market.

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You can see our exhibit at the following conventions:

Convention	Place
National Association of College Admissions Counselors (NACAC)	Denver, CO Oct. 5-8, 1976
Adult Education Association of the USA (AEA)	New York City, NY Nov. 18-21, 1976
American Vocational Association (AVA)	Houston, TX Dec. 3-8, 1976
National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)	New Orleans, LA Jan. 14-17, 1977
American Association of School Administrators (AASA)	Las Vegas, NV Feb. 25-28, 1977
American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA)	Dallas, TX Mar. 6-9, 1977
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)	Houston, TX Mar. 19-23, 1977
National School Boards Association (NSBA)	Houston, TX Mar. 26-29, 1977
American Industrial Arts Association (AIAA)	New Orleans, LA Apr. 4-8, 1977
National Catholic Education Association (NCEA)	San Francisco, CA Apr. 11-14, 1977
American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC)	Denver, CO Apr. 17-19, 1977
American Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)	Houston, TX Apr. 17-21, 1977
Vocational Industrial Clubs of America (VICA)	Cincinnati, OH Jun. 20-24, 1977
National Education Association (NEA)	Minneapolis, MN Jul. 2-7, 1977

RESEARCH CLUES

By JOHN H. HOLLIFIELD
Assistant Director, Center for Social Organization of Schools, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland.

Findings like those reported here have to be assessed carefully. What works in one situation may not in another. A single study seldom settles an issue or determines "the truth" once and for all. Knowledge accumulates slowly.

But new ideas deserve our consideration and often repay it. Moreover, we may sometimes be struck as much by the audacity and ambition of a researcher as by his or her results. If a study opens up a new field of speculation for us, that may be contribution enough.

How does individual math instruction compare to traditional instruction in math?

Individualized math instruction is as effective as traditional math instruction but does not have a distinct advantage for student achievement, according to this review of 145 studies. Other findings are that individualized instruction has a limited effect on student attitudes, appears to be a little bit more effective with low-ability students than with high-ability ones, and is not more effective with one sex or the other. One disconcerting note: The review indicates that as the duration of the individualized instruction increases, the student achievement average decreases.

Teachers who use or who are considering using individualized math instruction get neither encouragement nor discouragement from this review. It presents individualized math as an alternative to traditional instruction but not as a decisive factor in increasing student achievement in this subject area.

See Richard L. Miller. "Individualized Instruction in Mathematics: A Review of Research." *The Mathematics Teacher* 69: 345-51; May 1976.

How can disruptive nonlearners become nondisruptive learners?

Put the disruptive nonlearners into a class of above-average students studying accelerated material, and the peer group influence will change the disruptive attitudes, according to this study, which was interestingly reported in the May 1976 issue of *The Clearinghouse*.

Six junior high students who, after four months of school, were learning nothing because they weren't trying and who were actively disrupting their classrooms were identified for this study. Each of them was placed in an accelerated class where all the students frowned on disruptive behavior. After testing the water for a week or so, all six ceased their bad behavior. Three adapted completely to the new class norms—they behaved themselves and worked diligently at their classwork. The other three behaved themselves but did less work than their new classmates.

Despite the small sample, this study has important implications. The power of the peer group to "cure" disruptive behavior is a force that teachers may occasionally be able to apply in their classrooms.

See Sanford Pesner. "Education of a Disruptive Non-Learner: A New Concept." *The Clearinghouse* 49: 413-15; May 1976.

Should educational films use narrators of the same race as the students who will view the films?

Not necessary, says this study of black students in grades five and six. The study investigated the idea that black students might be more responsive to educational films with black actors than to those with white actors. The majority of the students, however, were equally attentive to two identical films, one with black actors and one with white. The author states that teachers shouldn't hesitate to use films featuring white actors to teach black students.

See Andre Morin. "Do Educational Films Produced with Same-Race Communicators Promote Learning?" *The Journal of Negro Education* 45: 197-203; Spring 1976.

What first grade skills predict subsequent reading performance in children?

This seven-year follow-up study of 56 children identified one first grade skill test that predicted reading performance in all seven grades in subsequent years. The test—"giving names of letters"—requires the student to look at a letter and say its name.

The success of this test as a predictor can be explained in two ways, say the authors. First, students entering first grade who score high on the test have obviously learned the skill in their homes and come from home environments conducive to learning. Second, this skill may be maturational, so the test is identifying students who are further along in their maturation process and thus more ready to read.

See Sigmar Muehl and Mario C. DiNello. "Early First Grade Skills Related to Subsequent Reading Performance: A Seven-Year Follow-Up Study." *Journal of Reading Behavior* 8: 67-81; Spring 1976.

What's the difference between rewarding correct behavior and rewarding correct work?

You double the results when you reward correct work, according to this study, because rewarding correct work also results in students' displaying more correct behavior. Vice versa doesn't work—rewarding correct behavior doesn't get students to do more correct work.

This well-conceived little study of five students between the ages of nine and 12 has some deep implications. Teachers who have students with behavior problems may not need to engage actively in trying to change the behavior. If teachers can appropriately reward correct work instead, the correct behavior may follow as a matter of course.

See Joel Hundert, Bradley Bucher, and Michael Henderson. "Increasing Appropriate Classroom Behavior and Academic Performance by Reinforcing Correct Work Alone." *Psychology in the Schools* 13: 195-200; April 1976.

Do most children want to follow the careers of their parents?

No. This study of 156 fourth grade students found that only 6 percent wanted to follow in the career footsteps of their parents. Their career choices showed more influence from television, teachers, and other people than from parents. The impact of television was evident in the children's desires to become professional football players, paramedics, police officers, astronauts, movie stars, and singers.

The choices reflect lack of knowledge about careers that is probably natural for fourth graders. As career education programs in elementary schools increase, however, teachers will be expected to provide the information that will help children achieve a much more mature attitude toward careers.

See Calvin Doss. "Parental Influence on Career Ambitions of Fourth Grade Students." *Education* 96: 165-67; Winter 1975.

Do open schools promote curiosity and open-mindedness?

This comparison of 83 fifth and sixth graders attending traditional and open schools found that the open-school students scored higher on two subtests of curiosity—preference for novelty and preference for change. No differences were found for open-mindedness.

The traditional school had some open aspects, and the open school had some traditional aspects. The students had similar socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, but the authors do not specify whether attending the open school was required or selected—a serious omission when trying to compare characteristics of students and attribute differences to school effects.

See Susan F. Elias and Jeffrey W. Elias. "Curiosity and Open-mindedness in Open and Traditional Classrooms." *Psychology in the Schools* 13: 226-32; April 1976.

Do children in open and traditional schools have some personality differences?

This study finds that children eight to 10 years old who have attended open schools for at least two years have definite differences in personality from children who have attended only traditional schools. The boys who have attended open schools are more emotionally stable, assertive, happy-go-lucky, venturesome, tender-minded, shrewd, casual, and extroverted than the boys who have attended only traditional schools. On the minus side, the former are also more excitable, doubting, tense, apprehensive, and anxious. The open-school girls have the same positive and negative characteristics except they are not more excitable, doubting, apprehensive, and anxious. They're also more outgoing and conscientious.

The students in this study chose whether to attend the open or the traditional school, and they were allowed to transfer afterward. The authors imply that these personality differences do not result from the different school programs but that open and traditional schools attract students with different personality traits.

Open-school teachers might note that this is another study in which open-school students (boys) have been found to have higher anxiety levels than traditional-school students.

See Clayton Farrall and Karl Thaller. "Children's Personality—Does It Differ in Traditional and Open Classrooms?" *The Elementary School Journal* 76: 440-49; April 1976.

Are open-school students less persuasible than traditional school students?

Yes, says this study of 56 third grade students, 26 of whom had been in an open school and 30 of whom had been in a traditional school for at least three years. This researcher sees students who are more independent in their thinking as less persuasible.

A strong point of the sample is that the students did not select the schools but were assigned to them. Weak points are that personality of the teachers may have influenced the results, the socioeconomic background of the students was not controlled, and the researcher obviously favors open schools.

See Laraine Bensis. "The Degree of Persuasibility Among Open-Classroom Children and Traditional Classroom Children: A Comparative Study." *Graduate Research in Education and Related Disciplines* 7: No. 2; Spring-Summer 1974.

Do open schools promote more positive student attitudes?

This study found that sixth grade students in three open schools, compared to sixth grade students in three traditional schools, have more positive attitudes toward teachers and other school authorities and more positive attitudes toward schooling and learning in general. The study also found that the former shared their schoolwork with friends and family, visited museums, and read books more than the latter. No differences were found for academic expectations, self-esteem, and performance on academic type tasks.

See D. E. Groobman, John R. Forward, and Christopher Peterson. "Attitudes, Self-Esteem, and Learning in Formal and Informal Schools." *Journal of Educational Psychology* 68: 32-35; 1976.

Do open schools promote positive self-images of Indian youth?

Yes, in this study which compared seventh and ninth grade Indian students attending an open school to Indian and white youths attending a traditional school. The open-school Indian students had a more positive self-image than either the Indian or the white students in the traditional school. The authors point out that the characteristics of open schools seem to clash less with Indian custom and practice than the characteristics of traditional schools.

See W. C. Cockerham and A. L. Blevins. "Open School vs. Traditional School: Self-Identification Among Native American and White Adolescents." *Sociology of Education* 79: 164-69; April 1976. □

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TEACHER OPINION POLL

Cutbacks

Did your school board inform you last year (1974-75) that you might not be employed this school year (1975-76) if funds were not available? NEA Research asked this question and one other on cutbacks due to financial problems in its latest Teacher Opinion Poll.

The vast majority of the nationwide sample of public school teachers—93.6 percent—said they had received no such notice from their school boards. Of the others—all of whom had received notices—4.9 percent said that despite the notice, they had been reemployed in the same teaching position; 1 percent said they were reemployed in another position in the same system; and the remaining .5 percent said they are now employed in another school system.

The other question on cutbacks had two parts. The first asked to what extent cutbacks in the instructional program had been a problem—both to the respondent and to other teachers in the school system. Sixty percent of the respondents said cutbacks had been a major or a minor problem to them personally, while 40 percent claimed they were not; 80 percent said cutbacks were a major or minor problem for other teachers in the system, and 20 percent said they were not.

The second part of the question asked, "If cutbacks have been made, in what ways have they occurred?" Teachers checked all items that applied in their system. The items and the percentages of teachers that checked them follow:

- Decrease in teaching materials 64.0
- Decrease in overall teaching staff 54.3
- Increase in class size 53.3
- Elimination of some school programs 43.7
- Decrease in supplementary texts 41.8
- Decrease in special subject teachers (e.g., music, art) 40.3
- Delay in purchase of more modern texts 35.4
- Decrease in other teaching staff (e.g., counselors, assistant principals) 28.2
- Curtailment of extracurricular activities 26.7
- Increase in out-of-class duties 20.9
- Other 9.1

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LETTERS

Ideas and opinions in this feature are those of the writers and not necessarily of the NEA. "Letters" is primarily a forum for NEA members. If you are currently a member, please paste the mailing label from a recent copy of Today's Education *at the top of your letter. Also indicate your school, position, and home address.*

The Good Ship

Professor Murray ("The Good Ship Lollipop," September-October) exhibits a lively writing style, and he certainly has left no gangplank unwalked in letting us know the advantages and disadvantages of the world campus afloat.

The article leaves me with one nagging doubt, however. What is needed is some concerted action to obtain the funds to bring this excellent experience within the grasp of the many, many students who are unable to afford it.

—Jack Gillespie, *executive director, Educational Press Association of America.*

Estimating Our Influence

It took me longer than it did Miss Van Derbur to discover what she has effectively pointed out in "Never Underestimate Your Influence" (September-October). In the early days of my teaching career I felt frustrated because I failed to get an overt reaction from every student. Happily, I finally reached the conclusion that one can't know which students one has influenced, nor how.

The former students who remember me with Christmas cards are not always the outstanding ones who are easy for me to remember. Often they are those who seemed nonentities when they sat in my classes.

What Miss Van Derbur had to say in her article is not really new, but it is good to be reminded that it may sometimes be through us teachers that "God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform."

—Gunnar Horn, *head, English Department, Benson High School, Omaha, Nebraska.*

Globe-Trotting Kids

I've just read your articles on globe-trotting children ("Peripatetic Pupils" and "Third-Culture Kids," September-October). Nostalgia. I attended school in Teheran, Iran; Williamsburg, Virginia; and Izmir, Turkey. Now I teach ninth grade English in Arkansas.

For me, it's an odd feeling to be growing roots. I've always carried the concept of home in my mind: Home is where the people you love are. Now this means a specific place, too. I'm still trying to get used to the idea.

Has my experience as a third-culture kid affected my teaching? Definitely. For example, I show students how it feels to be a "foreigner" by teaching a 15-minute lesson on Victor Hugo's poetry entirely in French. When I teach about different cultures, I recount some of my experiences with people from different places.

—Toni Sills, *English teacher, Gardner Junior High School, Russellville, Arkansas.*

Negotiating Discipline

Robert Wegmann fails to acknowledge the most important factor in "Classroom Discipline: A Negotiable Item" (September-October). Teachers are successful only when they are negotiating from a position of strength. In too many schools, the teacher has no negotiating power whatsoever.

Dr. Wegmann also leaves many questions unanswered. Why do teachers have control over some classes but not over others? When certain students are absent, but not when they are present? Under certain administrators, but not under others?

Worse, Dr. Wegmann has provided a way out for communities, parents, school boards, and administrators who would rather blame the teacher for discipline problems than assume their own responsibilities in the matter.

—William Joseph Miller, *sixth grade teacher, Parkland Middle School, Louisville, Kentucky.*

Alternative Education v. Basic Skills

The advocates of alternative education and of a return to basic skills seem to be on a collision course. Alternative education programs often don't even include basic skills for fear of boring the students. Yet more and more states are requiring basic skills tests for graduation.

Offering nontraditional alternative education for students who just don't want to work isn't educationally sound. Those students will remain semiliterate.

Isn't it about time that we, as professional educators, assume our professional responsibilities and determine for students what they need? Perhaps a return to basic skills means a return to professional decision making that provides structure for students. Students who master the basic skills will earn the opportunity to elect nontraditional courses and alternative education which is educationally valid. If we do this, perhaps we can avoid collision between basic skills and alternative education.

—Arnold Wile, *guidance housemaster, Andrew Warde High School, Fairfield, Connecticut.*

No Royal Road

"The Myth of the Royal Road" (September-October) caused me to remember the words of Calvin Coolidge: "Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent."

—Arthur H. Prince, *philosophy teacher, DeNeuville Heights School, Memphis, Tennessee.*

Research in Education

I thank Harold Howe for his article, "What's Wrong with Research in Education?" (September-October). One cannot devise a new educational direction every year, and even the attempt invites irresponsibility. Without realizing it, the teacher begins to think, "I don't have to defend last year's program, because it's been discarded anyway. Now I have this year's model."

To prepare students for roles in a rapidly changing culture means educational change. But students also need a firm foundation in values, methods, and information that do *not* rapidly change—and they need models of responsible behavior. I take pride in being able to tell my students: "The

LETTERS
(continued)

principles you are going to learn are much the same as those taught three or five years ago. This is not a throwaway course which will be discarded before you graduate."

—Brant W. Abrahamson, *social science teacher, Riverside-Brookfield High School, Riverside, Illinois.*

Parents' Concerns

If students from middle-class or upper-middle-class parts of your district are now being transported to school in a lower-income area, some of their parents may express concerns you don't expect. They will question the credentials and the experience of the teachers and the administrators in the "new" school. They will worry about whether their children will be able to cope with the "traumatic" change, to get along with the other children, to understand the teacher. They will wonder whether the teachers will understand their children, whether the children will be placed in the honors group and not with the "local" students, or will like the cafeteria food.

What is so interesting about the whole matter is that the children generally accept everything without a whimper, and there are few problems —except the telephone calls to the counselors, teachers, and administrators from Mom and Dad, who are so concerned.

—Jack Wheeland, *assistant principal, Ernie Davis Junior High School, Elmira, New York.*

The Cardinal Principles Revisited

I agree with the panel ("The Seven Cardinal Principles Revisited," September-October) that the processes of science are very important to teach. However, the idea that all scientific information is rapidly going out of date is inaccurate. The major scientific concepts like Faraday's theories or Darwinism are being refined, not scrapped. Getting our students to accumulate the necessary factual knowledge is still a major problem in technology as well as science and cannot be glossed over by emphasis on process.

The panel properly emphasizes the interdependence of humanity, but nowhere does its report face up to the problem of nationalism or parochialism within a nation. Interdependence may easily be interpreted as homogenization, but that is contrary to what our human experience tells us. Interdependence, however important, eventually must be married to our pride in culture and nation.

—Paul E. Klinge, *assistant to the president, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.*

We must find a moral equivalent of work for economic gain. Work for us in America, and for a large part of the Western world, has meant two things: a means of increasing our individual income and material well-being, and a means of climbing in the social scale. The notion of work as a means of expressing ourselves, of doing something well, of pride in workmanship, and the like has seldom been a part of the mentality of the American people. In short, we have been unable to separate prestige and income from work. I think the age into which we are moving will provide motivations for work that transcend economic gain and social prestige.

—B. Othanel Smith, *Clearwater, Florida; professor of education emeritus, University of Illinois and University of South Florida.*

Taking Charge of Quality Education

As black Americans and professional educators, we fully recognize the responsibility of black students and the black community in the quest for quality education. Focusing on past injustices and demanding reparation will not obviate the need to attain the academic tools required to negotiate this postindustrial society.

In a time of budget cutting and relaxed standards in public education, we will have to do more for ourselves. Afro-Americans in the professions can provide much of the necessary leadership, because we have the time, the educational resources, and supposedly the commitment to this endeavor.

—Paula H. Farrell, *special education teacher, West Chester Public Schools, and* Walter C. Farrell, *associate professor of urban studies, Cheyney State College, Cheyney, Pennsylvania.*

No More Graderaids

During the 1975-76 school year, the NEA Membership Office offered free Graderaids stickers for use on students' papers. During that time, we gave away more than half a million Graderaids. Now our supply is exhausted, and we won't be producing any more for the 1976-77 school year, so we can't fill any requests received after last June.

—Joe Fisher, *NEA Membership Office.*

Today's Education Reprints

Reprints of the following popular *Today's Education* articles are now available:

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THE TEACHER AND THE LAW

Recent Supreme Court Rulings

In recent months, the United States Supreme Court has issued a number of rulings that affect public employees. Many of these indicate a decline in the level of protection public employees can expect from federal court actions.One decision, however, does assure public employees of the right to secure monetary relief from governmental agencies in actions brought under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended in 1972 to cover state and local government employees. (Title VII protects employees from employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.)

In *Fitzpatrick* v. *Bitzer,* present and retired male employees of the State of Connecticut challenged provisions of the state employees' retirement benefit plan as discriminatory on the basis of sex. The plan permitted women employees to retire five years earlier than men, and women were given certain benefits not provided for men.

The State of Connecticut did not challenge the lower court's finding that the plan was discriminatory but did challenge the right of the discriminated employees to receive retroactive benefits and attorneys' fees. The state relied on a previous ruling of the U.S. Supreme Court which involved welfare benefits that had been wrongfully withheld. In the earlier case the Court had found that the Eleventh Amendment to the Constitution barred such retroactive relief against the state. The Court noted that the welfare case was not brought under a statute which specifically authorized suits against a state as an employer.

Title VII, however, was developed pursuant to Congressional authority under the Fourteenth Amendment and authorized employment discrimination suits against state and local governments.

Ruling in the Connecticut case, the High Court stated that "we think that Congress may, in determining what is 'appropriate legislation' for the purpose of enforcing the provisions of the Fourteenth Amendment, provide for private suits against States or state officials which are constitutionally impermissible in other contexts."

While the Court found strong Congressional authority to legislate Fourteenth Amendment remedies against state governmental entities, it did not find such authority to legislate standards under the interstate commerce provisions of the Constitution. In the case of *National League of Cities* v. *Usery,* the Court, by a five-to-four vote, ruled that the minimum wage and overtime amendments to the Fair Labor Standards Act cannot be applied to state and local government employees who are engaged in traditional governmental activities. (Teachers were not covered by the amendments.)

The Court held that Congress may not regulate interstate commerce "so as to force directly upon the states its choice as to how essential decisions regarding the conduct of integral governmental functions are to be made." The Court declared that "such assertions of power would allow the national government to devour the essentials of state sovereignty."

While the Court's opinion does not refer expressly to collective bargaining, the decision has obvious ramifications in this area. NEA is considering the permissible scope of Congressional action in the field of public employee collective bargaining.

The decision, however, does not rule out pending federal legislation to extend unemployment compensation coverage to state and local workers. NEA attorneys stress that the unemployment compensation law is not in the same category as the wage and hour law, since it would not affect integral operations of government in states and cities.

In another case, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the firing of 85 striking Hortonville, Wisconsin, teachers by the school board did not violate the teachers' due process rights to an impartial decision maker under the Fourteenth Amendment.

In the six-to-three ruling, the justices overturned the decision of the Wisconsin Supreme Court that the teachers had been deprived of due process—and thereby improperly fired—because the school board, as an adversary in a bitter strike, was not a fair and impartial decision maker. The Hortonville Education Association, backed by the Wisconsin Education Association Council and NEA, had argued that the state court should be upheld.

The High Court held, however, that "respondents have failed to demonstrate that the decision to terminate their employment was infected by the sort of bias that we have held to disqualify other decision makers as a matter of federal due process. A showing that the Board was 'involved' in the events preceding this decision, in light of the important interest in leaving the Board the power [to hire and fire and run the school system] given by the state legislature, is not enough to overcome the presumption of honesty and integrity in policymakers with decision-making power."

The importance of an adequate state law is apparent in a comparison made by the justices between Wisconsin law relating to teachers and the law covering firefighters and police officers. They noted that state law gave the latter workers "the right to appeal a decision of the board of police and fire commissioners to a state court; the statute expressly provided that the court was to determine whether 'upon the evidence, the order of the board was reasonable.' "

Thus the Supreme Court majority opinion implied that a different result would be reached on the issue of the necessity for an outside decision maker in cases where striking teachers were entitled under state law to a "reasonable" decision since a board could not be expected to judge its own "reasonableness." Therefore, an uninvolved party would be required to decide whether dismissal was a

(Continued on page 20)

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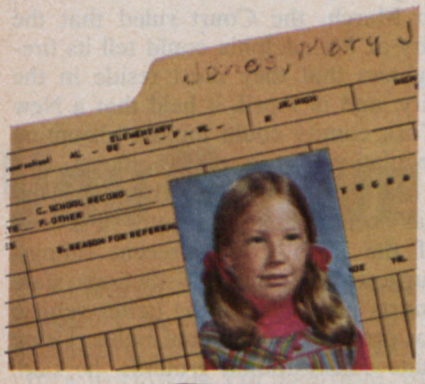

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"reasonable" response to a teachers' strike.

On the issue of bias, the state court had suggested that the firings were "possibly a convenient alternative which would eliminate their [the board's] labor problems in one fell swoop." The Court said that even if true, this would not be the determining factor. The majority opinion decided that there was nothing to prove that the board did not act within its legal authority in a way "which, in their judgment, would serve the best interests of the school system. That the result may also have been desirable for other reasons is irrelevant. . . ." The justices concluded that "the Board's decision was only incidentally a disciplinary decision; it had significant governmental and public dimensions as well."

NEA attorneys stress that the ruling does not give boards everywhere a free hand to fire strikers whenever and however they please. Their analysis indicates that the Court's ruling turns on the justices' view of Wisconsin statutes and would not necessarily apply in states with different laws and different situations.

In *Bishop* v. *Wood,* the Court ruled that a Marion, North Carolina, police officer had no right to a predismissal hearing. The officer, Carl Bishop, had argued that he had a right to a due process hearing because he had "property" and "liberty" interests as outlined by the High Court in the NEA-backed *Sindermann* and *Roth* cases on rights of nontenured teachers.

The High Court found against him on both issues. Ruling on Bishop's "property" interest, the Court split five to four, with the majority saying that public employees have a constitutional right to refute charges against them only if they have a legally enforceable expectation of continued employment, stemming, for example, from a statute or a contract, express or implied.

Bishop contended that he had what amounted to tenure because he had completed probation and was termed a "permanent" employee. He claimed that a city ordinance stipulated that such employees could be fired only if found guilty of one of a specific list of infractions. The majority of five justices refused to even interpret this ordinance, however, instead simply accepting the lower courts' view that no public employee in North Carolina has a "property" interest unless conferred by state law and that Bishop "held his position at the will and pleasure of the city."

On the "liberty" issue, the justices ruled seven to two that Bishop's liberty to maintain his reputation in the community had not been injured by the city since the city manager had made the charges against him (including "conduct unsuited to an officer") in private to Bishop. The charges came out, they noted, only when brought out in litigation.

NEA's Office of General Counsel points out that teachers should be on notice that they should be less dependent on the federal courts and more determined to secure explicit protections in contracts and statutes. Then if an issue must be pressed in federal court, the situation will be more likely to meet the standards the Supreme Court is setting.

While the ruling is certainly disappointing, NEA's Office of General Counsel states that its application to other cases will depend on varying factual circumstances. NEA attorneys say that public employees' due process rights will still be intact in other "property" interest contexts. These include, but are not limited to, instances when they are tenured or are covered by an individual contract, collective agreement, or statute giving them the express or implied right not to be fired unless there is just cause. The attorneys also note that while the decision makes proving a "liberty" interest more difficult, such proof may still be possible in particular cases with situations differing from Bishop's.

Finally, even the Supreme Court majority said that its ruling would not apply if the real reason behind a dismissal was "to curtail or to penalize the exercise of an employee's constitutionally protected rights"—such as free speech or association.

These unfavorable rulings must be viewed as a clear inclination on the part of the Supreme Court to stay out of local and state governments' way in public employee matters—particularly when taken with two other cases. In March, the Court ruled that the city of Philadelphia could tell its firefighters that they must reside in the city, and in April, it held that a New York county could impose grooming regulations on its police officers.

All in all, as Justice Brennan, who has been an angry dissenter in several of the High Court's recent rulings, suggests, in some jurisdictions state courts may become the better vehicle for protecting individual rights. Using state constitutional grounds, he said, some of these courts are increasingly expanding rights while the Supreme Court reaches opposite conclusions under similar provisions of the U.S. Constitution.

—NEA DuShane Fund, Teacher Rights Division.

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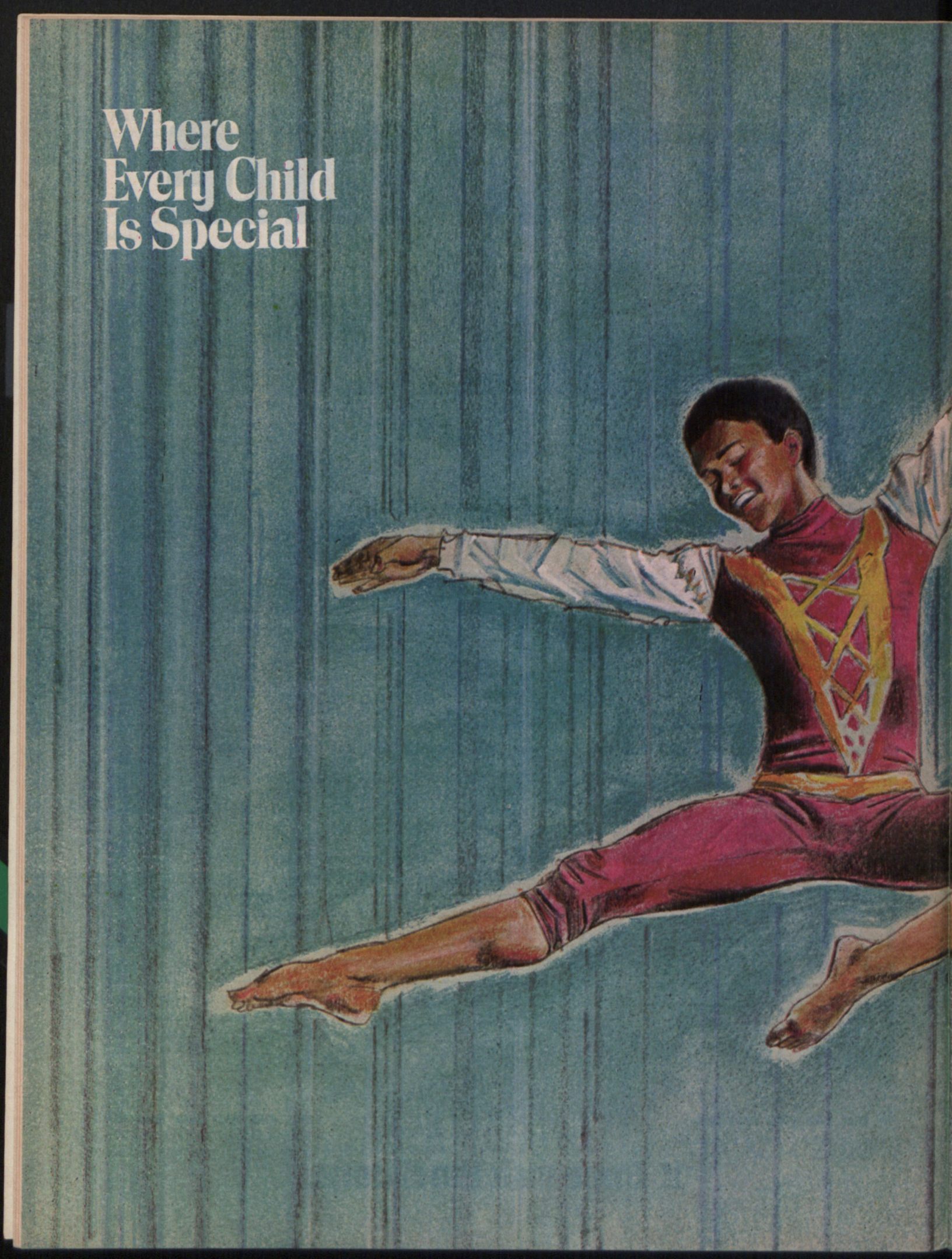
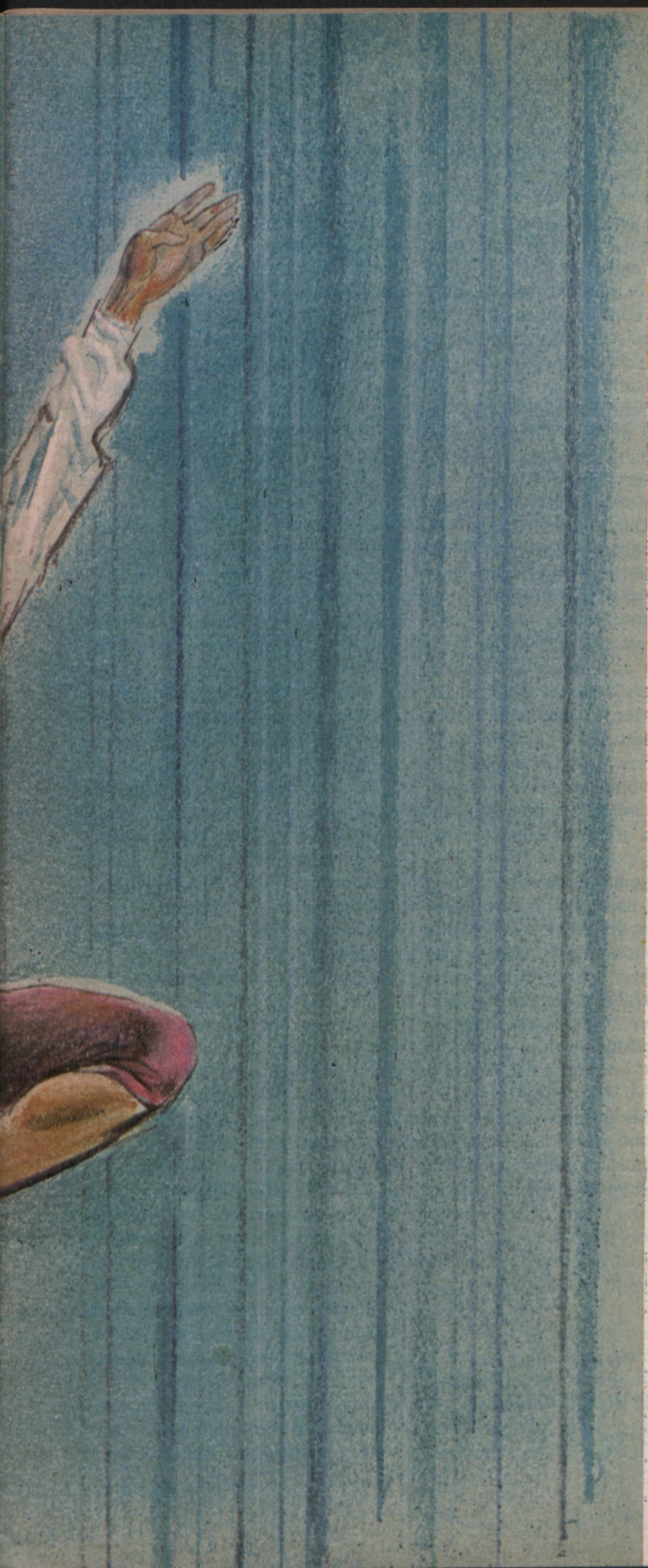




By BEL KAUFMAN
Teacher; Public Speaker; Writer;
Author of Long-Time Best Seller,
Up the Down Staircase.

Tucked away in the heart of the theater and porno district of New York is a public high school unlike any other in the city, probably in the country, possibly in the world. I have walked there from the subway so many times I can almost see my footprints indented in the asphalt as I turn from Times Square into 46th Street to the ancient red brick building with its weather-beaten flag extended in a weary salute over the door.

Inside, the shabby rooms are alive with youngsters: In one, they are practicing *pliés* at the *barre*; in another, declining French verbs; in another, taking an algebra test. In the auditorium, rehearsals; in the basement, improvisations; on the top floor, a cacophony of sounds: cello, flute, bassoon. On every floor, in every room, young people are tuning up, warming up, boning up, limbering up for their futures.

Here children talented in dance, drama, or music are trained for a professional career on the stage at the same time that they are prepared for college—and all at no cost. Many of their teachers are well-known professionals; some began their own careers at the school. Sidney Lumet used to teach in the Drama Department, Robert Joffrey in the Dance Department, even Carroll O'Connor taught English at the school for a while before he became Archie Bunker. An Advisory Commission composed of Clive Barnes, Leonard Bernstein, Martha Gra-

ham, and others equally distinguished guards the high professional standards of the school.

This is P.A., more formidably known as School of Performing Arts, Division of Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music and the Arts; and today, when many of our schools are so dismally failing our angry urban children, it has something important to say about education.

Where else in any city public school do students, intense, involved, come early and stay late, in love with what they're doing? Where else are they exposed to excellence in assemblies where no frantic whistle blows for attention, no cops patrol the aisles, no adolescents snicker at revealing tights or tulle? Where else in our depersonalized educational system is there such a warm relationship between students and teachers, and such mutual respect? And where else, in this day of racism and violence in our schools, do you see a blonde ponytail and a thick Afro bent in deep concentration over a script, or thin childish black arms intertwined with thin childish white arms in a dance pattern?

It's a small school, an intimate school of no more than 600 students, whose fervor insulates them against the inadequacies of their decrepit building and the sleaziness of the street outside. One morning, as I was walking to school, I was accosted by a junkie. At once a small boy in my freshman English class materialized at my side, put his arm firmly around my waist, and said: "She's with me," as he escorted me into the building.

P.A.'s poor facilities and lack of equipment are but proof of the determination that has overcome them. As a matter of fact, it has had to fight for its very existence against those who consider it an unnecessary frill and scornfully refer to it as "the talent school."

It has suffered most in New York's current financial crisis. The budget cuts that are affecting all of the City's public schools are threatening the very life of P.A., for the elimination of a number of teaching periods in Dance and Drama and of specially trained teachers is likely to eliminate the very program that has made the school unique.

Up to now, it has managed to overcome all obstacles. The peeling plaster and concave couch in the Teachers' Room cannot daunt the dedication of the faculty. The rickety stage in the small auditorium offers itself, boundless, to the eager young actors; the inadequate wall mirror in the dance studio reflects a future glory in the glass.

I have taught in the most modern school buildings, in classes with the latest in blackboards (covered with chalked obscenities), white telephones in every room (ripped out), murals (defaced), escalators (broken), where students are erupting in violence or—worse—sunk in apathy.

Much has been written of late, by myself and others, about the war between our children and our schools. About frightened teachers, helpless administration, underprivileged, nonachieving, rebellious students. About youngsters who have nothing to look forward to in school or out, who either stay away or drift into class only because their program cards tell them to.

Many P.A. students spring from the same soil, the same street, often the same slum as these others. The vast difference between the two is not only that P.A. students are touched with talent as with grace, but—far more important—that they are treated differently. "The difference between a lady and a flower girl," as Eliza Doolittle observes in *Pygmalion*, "is not how she behaves, but how she's treated." The students at P.A. are treated as valuable people. Their potential is discovered and nurtured. Their needs are met. Their individuality is fostered. Their talents are developed. They are respected for what they are and what they could become.

Each of them enters P.A. with a private dream of making it big. And why not? They have the luminous examples of former students before them: Liza Minnelli, Richard Benjamin, Al Pacino, Eartha Kitt, many others. Didn't they sit at the same desks, walk through the same halls?

The children come to auditions from every borough, from every kind of home, as nervous as if their lives depended on their trial performances. And often they do. Black, Hispanic, Oriental, white—out of some 4,000 who apply each year, the school has room for only 200, a sad ratio. Many among them have no money for dancing shoes or musical instruments; certainly they could never afford private lessons.

Their goals as freshmen are simple. What do you want to be? Concert violinist. Premier danseur. Movie star. One girl wrote: "I want to be a model and work in a orphange." As seniors they become more realistic: Music therapist.

On every floor, in every room, young people are tuning up, warming up, boning up, limbering up for their futures.

Dance teacher. Nurse.

In four years at P.A., they do a lot of growing: The cerise satin blouse gives way to the black turtleneck; the sloppy speech, to careful consonants and rounded vowels; the raw and awkward children, to poised, self-confident young people. No myths of swimming pools and instant stardom intrude to dazzle them now. They have discovered how arduous the work, how long the discipline, and how few succeed. They have learned that success doesn't always depend on talent and hard work.

Aware of the precariousness of their professions, 90+ percent go on to colleges—excellent colleges that want them and offer them scholarships, for good reasons. Not because they were trained to be stars, though to the young everything is still possible, but because, whether they make it big or medium or small, they make it as people. Because they've had four years of the discipline a difficult art imposes. Because they know who they are and where they want to go. Because they have learned not only their strengths but their limitations. Above all, because they have been treated as worthwhile human beings. They have been cared about. They have been given a chance.

How many mute, inglorious Gielguds are there who have never had that chance? How many dancers unseen, musicians unheard, talents undiscovered, skills undeveloped? How many children lost in the shuffle?

For almost 30 years, P.A. has contributed talented graduates to the American theater, but even its undergraduates serve the community and enrich the deprived neighborhoods of their city. A student of mine wrote: "We performed in this school for deaf kids that never even saw a dance concert before, and they were so excited they made weird noises in their throats because they couldn't talk, and it made me cry. They wanted to touch us, so we gave them bobby pins from our hair."

I come upon former students in likely and unlikely places. On a crowded beach, a man points a finger at me and loudly proclaims: "I *had* you!" And indeed, he had. He was in my English class at P.A. "I had this passion for acting," he tells me, "but I'm doing OK as a voice coach."

In a business office, the receptionist throws her arms around me. "Remember me?" she asks. "I was Modern Dance."

In an off-Broadway theater, an actor sights me in the audience and mouths a soundless, "Hi, teach!"

Choreographer, psychologist, musician—whatever the profession—each recalls P.A. with gratitude and affection, for each has been given something special by the school.

My sources, as always, are the students themselves:

"I don't want to stunt myself, and at P.A. I can be *me*!"

"Coming here was my turning point. I would never have found this huge part of me hidden within."

"Instead of thousands of dollars, all I need for here is carfare."

"I enjoy P.A. and it enjoys me."

"I've only been in the world 16 years, but at P.A. I've learned how to survive outside the classroom."

P.A. says something more than this. It says something about all the children in all our schools who never had a chance to make it anyplace, in anything, and never will. It says something about education that has not been achieved by all the experiments, from open corridors to locked doors, nor by all the cops and guards, nor by all the rhetoric of educators. And that is—that every child is special, and that to develop the potential of each, whatever that potential may be, is the highest aim of education. That whatever his talents, skills, or interests, each child must be valued for what he is and what he can become.

To develop the potential of each, whatever that potential may be, is the highest aim of education.

It says something about motivation. Instead of marking time for four aimless years or getting stamped into uniformity on a school assembly line or, under the stigma of being too dumb for anything else, plodding through a vocational school (often a catch-all for discards), youngsters involved in reaching specific, realistic, and meaningful goals transcend color lines and obviate discipline problems, no matter how old the building, how poor the neighborhood.

It says something about teachers who are masters in their field and who set an example of excellence.

It says something to other schools about hope against hopelessness, enthusiasm against lethargy, individuality against conformity, pride against contempt, creativity against destructiveness. It says something about the possibility of joy in the classroom.

Because there is such a school as P.A., there can be others where children feel good about themselves, schools which they enjoy and which enjoy them, schools that will help them survive outside the classroom. □

Higher Education Today and Tomorrow

By ALAN PIFER
President, Carnegie Corporation of America.

Like many other institutions these days, higher education has become the object of widespread skepticism. After an era of unprecedented growth, affluence, and exalted status in the 1960's, it stands very much on the defensive. Increasingly, doubts are being voiced as to whether its benefits are not outweighed by its costs and burdens.

Whatever the nature of the skepticism, whether justified or unfair, it constitutes a clear danger and a challenge to the academic community to set about regaining the public's confidence as rapidly as possible.

The causes of the present disenchantment are many and complex and range widely across the political and social spectrums of our national life. They include lingering public reaction against the excesses of student unrest in the late sixties; the disaffection of young people themselves from higher education because of the impersonal nature and tradition-bound rigidities of many campuses; the ideologically based hostility toward intellectual, "liberal" institutions generally fomented during the Nixon Administration; and finally, the ever-increasing costs of attending college.

More recently, public disenchantment with higher education may have been associated with a broad sense of alienation felt by many Americans from their leading social and political institutions, based on a gnawing consciousness of the nation's mistakes and failures in Southeast Asia, its seeming powerlessness to solve its most serious social problems, and its inability to achieve a stable economy.

Where these misgivings have affected the academic world, they have taken the form of a sharp reaction to the inflated and overconfident claims that were earlier made in its behalf. Higher education, it is now being said, was overbuilt and oversold during its golden age of the sixties. The notion that a more educated populace would produce a more enlightened, more progressive, and more just society was a delusion. The university's claim to a special capacity to solve great social, economic, and technological problems was overblown. Going to college is *not* the certain path to greater income and higher social standing it was represented to be.

Still another doubt concerning higher education seems to have caught the public fancy. This is the assertion, made confidently in many quarters now, that a college degree is no longer worth a young person's investment in it because of its declining economic return.

Given this general litany of disillusionment, it was almost inevitable that questions would begin to be raised about the priority higher education should be assigned in the allocation of scarce resources. Higher education has, of course, always had to compete with other public needs for its share of the tax dollar, and even in its heyday of greatest affluence could make a case that it was underfunded. Today, however, when the nation is still in the throes of the most prolonged and deepest economic recession in many decades, the issue of where the campus should stand in public funding priorities is infinitely more acute than at any time in recent memory. Indeed, it is probably higher education's greatest cause for concern today.

Clearly, in view of the widespread loss of public confidence in higher education, those who understand its importance and continue to put their faith in it must be prepared to reargue the case for it. In doing so, however, they must start with a candid admission that during its great period of expansion the academic community did acquire some unattractive faults. For all its great achievements it became somewhat arrogant and pretentious, lax in its intellectual and moral standards, and insensitive to the needs of the individual student. It came, furthermore, to perceive success more in terms of enrollment growth, number of degrees granted, construction of new buildings, and continuous expansion of functions than in the enhancement of academic quality.

Nevertheless, having acknowledged higher education's evident faults and the demonstrable case for wide-reaching reform—reform, incidentally, that is now under way in many places—there is much that one can say in support of the academic enterprise. Such a defense can best start with a reminder of the ways in which higher education's varied functions affect virtually every aspect of the nation's welfare. They may be roughly grouped under three headings: educational,

cultural, and socioeconomic.

Educational. The educational functions include higher intellectual development; professional and occupational training; the development of research capability; and, most importantly, cultivation in students of a breadth, flexibility, and autonomy of mind, and a questioning, even skeptical, spirit that will best prepare them to meet the demanding responsibilities of democratic citizenship in a rapidly changing nation and world. If higher education did not perform these functions, the nation simply could not operate at the level of sophistication and effectiveness required to meet our domestic and international needs.

Cultural. Cultural functions are threefold. First, the American concept of a democratic society has come to assume the right of all to share in the comprehension, enjoyment, and preservation of our immensely rich and varied cultural heritage. It has become higher education's responsibility, under the heading of liberal education, to keep alive this heritage by providing large numbers of young people with the opportunity to understand it.

Closely associated with this function is the role higher education plays as the actual conservator, custodian, and developer of the cultural heritage through its great libraries and museums and through the continuous illumination and reinterpretation of that heritage by a handful of truly great scholars. The number of academic institutions capable of performing this function at its highest level is limited, and it is impossible to overstate their value to the nation.

A third function under this heading is the one most colleges and universities perform in serving as cultural centers for the surrounding community. The enjoyment and informal education which the public gains—at very moderate cost—from campus art exhibitions, musical and dramatic performances, special lectures, and other events is significant in many areas of the country

Socioeconomic. One of the most important socioeconomic functions is the role higher education plays as the principal device for channeling millions of Americans into a wide variety of professions and higher level occupations. It does this not only by training them and helping them find jobs but also by providing evidence of their qualifications to potential employers. This channeling and credentialing function has been much criticized, but whatever its faults, it meets a tremendous national need.

A second immensely important socioeconomic function concerns the discovery of new knowledge. High-level research is not a monopoly of the academy and should not be, but much pure research, unrelated at the time it is conducted to any purpose other than enlargement of the boundaries of knowledge, would never be done elsewhere.

Not unrelated to higher education's role in preserving and extending knowledge is the capacity of the campus to provide a protected environment for dispassionate criticism of the larger society. Sometimes the criticism has amounted to little more than unsupported political or social opinion, and sometimes scholars have allowed themselves to become paid advocates for special interests. Nonetheless, where criticism is, as it should be, based on hard evidence derived from objective study and research, the function is of critical importance to the maintenance of a free society and deserves strong support.

Two other socioeconomic functions are closely related to one another. One is higher education's service role in which it provides the administrative base and intellectual resources for externally financed technical assistance programs. The other is its role as the permanent home for a large pool of highly trained faculty talent available on an individual consulting basis to government, industry, and nonprofit organizations. Although, as indicated, the university's claim to a special problem-solving capacity became vastly exaggerated, and although faculty consulting too frequently has taken the form of self-seeking absenteeism from the campus, higher education's technical assistance capability nonetheless is of real value to the nation.

Perhaps the socioeconomic function of higher education with which the public is most familiar is its role as the principal agent of social mobility and certifier of class status in the society, albeit with less assurance of success today than in the past. Much of the controversy surrounding higher education relates to this function. On the one hand, the opportunity to go to college has offered to many Americans just about their *only* chance to rise to middle and upper middle-class status, and they have seized it avidly. On the other, as more and more people have gone to college, those who have not have been implicitly and, of course, unfairly, stigmatized as failures. The blame for this dilemma should be assigned not to higher education alone but to the society at large for its failure to create viable alternative paths to economic success and social approbation.

Closely associated is higher education's function as the principal agency for the induction of youth into adulthood. This has both its positive and negative aspects. Viewing youth as a social and psychological stage of life during which some young people feel the need to pause for a few years of personal development before making an irrevocable commitment to the adult world, higher education provides just this opportunity, and usefully so. However, as virtually the only large-scale institution organized to

meet the needs of young people between the ages of 18 and 22, higher education tends to attract some students who profit little from it and would probably, given desirable alternatives, prefer not to be there. If alternatives were available, higher education would not be called on to play this "warehousing" role

Still another socioeconomic function and one which is rapidly gaining in significance is the opportunity higher education offers to adults, primarily through part-time study, for intellectual stimulation, career advancement, and personal growth.

Looking over this wide range of functions, one cannot but be impressed by the influential role higher education plays in this nation. An enterprise that was once of marginal value to the nation has become central to its strengths, and this will ever be so. There is no possibility now of turning back from that reality.

Loss of public confidence in higher education is therefore nothing short of a national tragedy. The damage already done is extensive, and it will be catastrophic if public estrangement from the campus is allowed to continue.

As we look toward the end of this century, we see two possible futures for higher education. The first is a strong diversified system of academic institutions, ranging from internationally renowned universities to locally oriented two-year colleges, all reaching a high degree of excellence in their varied missions and flexible enough to accommodate a pluralistic American population. The other is an array of stagnant institutions, plagued by low morale, unable to meet the demands of society, few, if any, of which command international respect. The outcome can be the former or the latter according to what we determine it will be. Unfortunately, the process of making that decision—by default—in favor of a negative vision of the future is already under way. It will only be reversed if a new consensus can be developed in regard to the position higher education should occupy in our scale of national priorities and values.

It is hard to see how such a consensus is to be attained without strong leadership from Washington. What is needed now is a clear demonstration by the nation's highest political leaders, both in Congress and in the Administration, of their awareness of higher education's importance to all Americans and a strong avowal of confidence in it.

The framework of a sensible federal program for the support of higher education is largely in place as the result of steps that have been taken during past years, although some parts of it are seriously underfunded and in other places supplemental actions and modifications are needed. The Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education has recently made a series of proposals for such changes in a statement entitled *The Federal Role in Post-Secondary Education, Unfinished Business 1975-1980.*

Approaching the matter in a way that differs only slightly from that taken by the Council, one can list seven priorities for federal aid. These are as follows:

- A generous program of support for graduate students.
- The support of advanced research, on a basis of competitive quality.
- Special grants for major research libraries and museums, both those that are university related and those that are independent.
- The support of medical and other health-related training.
- Strengthening of higher education's international dimension through the support of special language and area studies programs, research, and educational exchange.
- Maintenance of the existing special fund for assistance to experimental undertakings within higher education.
- Provision of the funds necessary to make equality of opportunity in higher education a reality.

Also highly desirable would be the program of tuition-equalization grants proposed by the Carnegie Council as a form of basic assistance to private institutions.

The principal responsibility for higher education, however, continues to lie with the states. On balance, the states have done a good job with higher education and until recently their support of it has held up extremely well. Nowhere, however, does the negative attitude toward higher education seem to be greater today than among some elected state officials. In certain states there seems to be an outright determination by legislators to reduce their great public universities from hard-won national and international ranking back to the status of purely local or, at best, regional institutions.

Nothing could be more shortsighted than this kind of negativism, yet turning it around will not be easy, so pervasive is it and so deeply is it now entrenched. A positive new attitude from Washington could, as indicated, make a considerable difference but may not be enough. Ways may also have to be found in particular states to arouse public opinion, perhaps through the creation of voluntary citizen movements. Those state officials who do continue to support higher education will also have to exert more leadership.

The same kind of negativism that characterizes many public officials is also evident in the business community. There one finds a deep resentment at what is considered to be a prevailing bias among faculty members and students against the corporate world, indeed against the "free enterprise system." For their part, many members of the academ-

ic community believe that recent disclosures of illegal or improper corporate activities do give them good cause to be suspicious of business, and some faculty and students unquestionably do have basic doubts about the capacity of the present economic system to produce a just society. Nevertheless, on neither side is the perception of the other wholly justified. The estrangement may, however, have reached a point today where it is injurious to the welfare of both parties and contrary to the national interest. On its side, business is heavily dependent on higher education for the research and trained manpower it produces, whereas higher education badly needs the business community's moral and financial support.

If a new consensus regarding the position of higher education in American life is to emerge, there is much that academic institutions themselves can do to assist.

First, they must stop trying to sell higher education to potential students primarily on the grounds of its economic benefits. This simply plays into the hands of those who are saying that the economic returns are no longer worth the investment. Colleges and universities should instead be stressing to students the many nonpecuniary benefits of the experience. To the public they must do a much better job of explaining the wide variety of functions performed by higher education. The more effective they can be in demonstrating the broad public interest in what they are about, the less they will be in the unhappy position of always seeming to plead a special self-interest.

Secondly, higher education institutions must continue to press ahead with the administrative and educational reforms on which they are now embarked. Every effort must be made to pare away unnecessary expense. In this kind of restructuring, however, the liberal arts, which are the very heart of higher education, must be neither jettisoned nor deemphasized. There may well be fewer students who feel that it is in their interest to graduate with majors in certain disciplines, but it ought to be mandatory for all students, whatever their majors, to include a generous portion of liberal education in meeting the requirements for their degrees. We dare not turn out narrowly trained graduates who lack the breadth and flexibility of mind that will be required for intelligent decision making in a rapidly changing world.

The most important task ahead for the academic community is to cut costs while at the same time preserving or even improving quality. Cost cutting should not be designed just to save institutional expense but to effect real savings for students, parents, and taxpayers. One way to accomplish this, although it does not help institutional budgets unless enrollments are increased, is to reduce the length of time required to gain degrees by better articulation of secondary, undergraduate, and graduate education as well as by improved organization of degree courses. The savings, if this new policy were to become general, would be considerable.

A number of experiments are being carried out now to see how the time required to gain degrees can be reduced without depreciating—and perhaps even enhancing—their value. Successful efforts to cut the cost of higher education by shortening its duration may prove to be one of the most helpful steps the academic community can take to regain public approbation and support. Two cautions, however, must always be kept in mind if this movement grows: Time-shortened degrees are by no means appropriate for all students, and they should never be achieved at the expense of abandoning the breadth of study necessary to produce a truly educated person.

Another area for consideration is that of faculty productivity. Some of the complaints about low teaching loads are grossly distorted and unfair. Nonetheless, evidence from a recent national survey of faculty indicates that the great majority of scholarly research and publication is done by a small minority of the professoriate. Clearly this raises the awkward question of whether some faculty members should have their teaching loads set on the assumption that they are doing research and writing they never have done and probably never will do.

Finally, higher education should review every aspect of its operations to be certain that in a moral sense it really does qualify for public trust and approval. For trustees and regents this means individual attention to the best interests of the institutions they are supposed to be serving and the elimination of self-interest in all its varied and subtle forms. For administrators it means constant alertness to see that the highest ethical standards are adhered to in every facet of institutional life. For faculty it means a greater devotion to the welfare of the institutions that employ them and to the best interests of students, as well as increased attention to moral values and ethical issues in their teaching. For students it means greater tolerance for the opinions and mores of other groups in the society.

The building of a new consensus about the place of higher education in our national life and reversal of the present negativism toward it is an enormous task. No one can promise that this urgent undertaking will succeed. If it does not, however, it will not be higher education alone but the entire nation that will be at risk. □

Condensed from the 1975 Carnegie Corporation Annual Report.

The Fun Subs Have

By PAUL FLEISHER
Substitute Teacher,
Chesterfield, Virginia.

Last fall, having muddled through the generation gap, the energy crunch, and a protracted Constitutional crisis, I found myself facing a new, more personal difficulty: My unemployment rate was up 100 percent. Since I was highly trained at great expense to my parents, committed to my chosen profession, and not particularly handy with hammers, backhoes, or computers, I decided to pursue my calling as best I could. I signed up to be a substitute teacher.

Of course, substituting runs a poor second to watching one's own class develop into great thinkers thanks to one's own creative and resourceful teaching, but it is *almost* teaching, and I did learn some things that I would like to share with my colleagues in the classroom and on the unemployment line.

First of all, I've found that being a substitute, or "subbing" as we say in the ed biz, places me in a rather strange moral position. I have to wake up early each morning hoping that someone is sick. My well-being depends on a fellow teacher's ill health. Things get worse if I pursue this line of reasoning further: If someone becomes seriously ill, I might get a chance to do some "real" teaching. And if I were really lucky, and somebody were to die, I could get a full-time position! All this begins to conjure up visions of Old Nick appearing in a cloud of sulphurous smoke to strike his bargain: My immortal soul for a fifth grade classroom.

Nor does the situation improve when I am finally established in my school for the day. I am immediately faced with another crisis. Invariably, some good-natured teacher will come up to me and ask, in all earnestness, "Well, who are you this morning?" This soul-shattering existential query usually calls forth a different response each day. So much for personal identity. Sometimes the best answer I can come up with is "You know the reading teacher down the hall? I think her name begins with an R."

It isn't an easy task for a sub to maintain mental balance. Remember your first day as a teacher? For a substitute, every day is the first day, with new sets of school procedures, new subject matter, and new, often hostile, faces. A sub is endlessly establishing rapport and learning bell schedules. On good days, I find the challenge rather exciting, but at other times I feel as though I were somewhere in the Cretan maze without my ball of string.

Then there are the students. As a substitute, I've come to suspect that a great majority of them are less than devoted to the pursuit of knowledge. When I arrive, they are suddenly plagued with stomachaches, headaches, toothaches, and more mysterious maladies, all of which seem to require trips to the nurse.

They suffer unaccountable losses of memory concerning their studies of the previous day. They tell wild tales of libertine teachers who "let them" do anything from completing their math homework during

English to playing a bit of touch football instead of doing their American history lesson. And they are amazingly busy, with all sorts of counselors to see, errands to run, and reports to write in the library. A trusting substitute could just keep writing passes for students' seemingly legitimate requests, only to look up from the desk at last and find that the four students left in the classroom are sound asleep.

There's no doubt that students often try to take advantage of substitute teachers—nor that they frequently succeed. They seem to make a game of seeing how much they can get away with, how much anger, outrage, or embarrassment they can elicit. They treat substitutes to a seemingly endless parade of attention-seeking behaviors. Sometimes four-letter words hover in the air like bats' cries, just beyond human hearing.

Meanwhile, the substitute has to maintain a calm, relaxed, good-humored attitude—and at the same time insist on an acceptable level of quiet and work from the students. This can be a hard compromise to reach in the face of apathetic or ornery students and skimpy lesson plans. If I were to make an issue out of every outburst by an ill-mannered student, I would find myself in a constant battle, which would probably end with my peace of mind being listed among the casualties.

On the other hand, I need to retain my livelihood. If my adopted class can be heard as far as the main office, the principal will probably ask me back again only out of desperation. A substitute must tread the razor's edge between sanity and unemployment.

My greatest delight as a substitute has been the few times when a class has arrived and gotten down to work on their own, as if I weren't even there. At these times I feel that I'm witnessing some genuine education, as opposed to "schooling." I always try to compliment the teachers of these rare classes for helping their students to get excited about learning and for allowing them to satisfy their aroused curiosities.

But when the lesson plan reads something like "continue with division," and the kids are getting restless, I like to fall back on an educational game or a song that will involve the whole class. Generally, the students see that something good is happening and so provide themselves with just enough discipline to participate in the class activity.

I've been amused and delighted to discover that games which are popular among elementary pupils can get just as large a following among older students. There's something that inspires hope for the future in watching big, arrogant seniors losing themselves in a quick round of 20 questions.

I never walk into a classroom without at least one such little goody in the back of my mind, in case things start to fall apart. It's like having an ace reliever in the bull pen.

A teacher may wonder just how effective his or her efforts to instill a love of learning in pupils have been or how well they have assimilated the behavioral-management system or what they say behind his or her back. The substitute probably knows. Students' behavior and comments on days when the teacher is absent could be valuable feedback for evaluating teacher effectiveness.

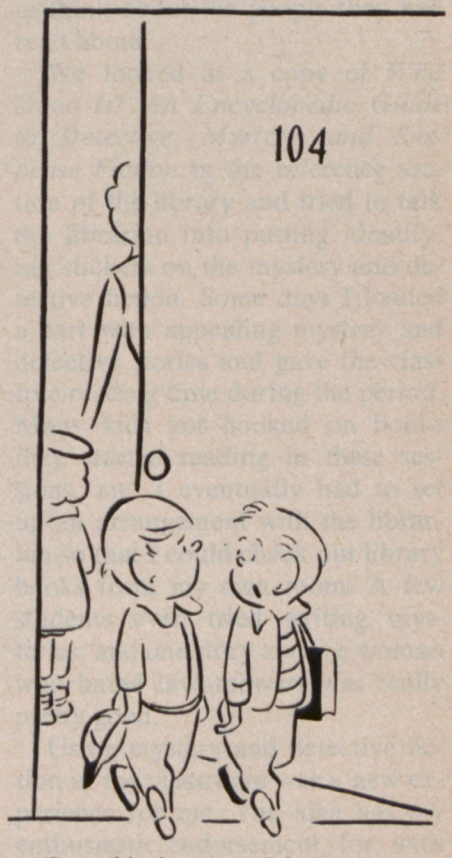
The sub might be able to help a teacher find out just how much wool students are pulling over his or her eyes. Do they really enjoy studying pre-Columbian stone artifacts or are they just trying to make the teacher happy?

But teachers, don't ask unless you really want to know. From what I've seen, the wool can sometimes be measured by the bale.

It is a basic tenet of the American ethic that struggle in the face of adversity builds character. If this is so, our nation has a great reservoir of fortitude in its unheralded legions of substitute teachers. The job's financial rewards are matched only by its status in the educational hierarchy and the solid satisfaction of working with students for a day or two and then never seeing them again.

So teachers, when you return to class after a well-deserved illness to discover that plans are disrupted, the students are undisciplined, and the room is littered with paper wads, do try to conjure a charitable thought. If nothing else, think about how much fun your sub must have had. □

As we went to press, *Today's Education* learned that Mr. Fleisher is now a sixth grade teacher in the Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools in Virginia.



"Something's wrong. I forget faster than I remember."

The Case of the Reluctant Readers

By **GLORIA CHANTLAND**
Free-Lance Writer and
Former High School English Teacher.

Increased reading rates, better reading comprehension, and improved listening skills—a big order. But that's what my twelfth grade, below-average, high school students needed and that's what Roald Dahl, Daphne du Maurier, Agatha Christie, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and I gave them.

I led off with Dahl's short story "Man from the South," which is a great little suspense story that's a natural for oral reading. It's about an old man who bets an American sailor that his lighter won't light 10 consecutive times without faltering. The stakes are the old man's Cadillac and the little finger of the sailor's left hand. The old man holds a meat cleaver over the finger, ready to chop, as they count to 10.

I read the story aloud to the class up to the count of nine, calmly closed the book, and told my students if they wanted to know what happened, they would have to read the ending of the story from the ditto sheets on my desk. There was a race to the front of the room and then silence as they read—reading because they wanted to and reading quickly because they wanted to find out what happened to that finger.

I gave them a short quiz based partially on the portion of the story they had listened to and partially on what they had read themselves. Then I followed up with two other Dahl stories, "Lamb to the Slaughter" and "Taste," using the same technique of reading to them and then letting them finish the story. They were hooked. They wanted more. And I decided to give them more. (I had given them short quizzes after each of these stories and noted a gradual improvement.)

Next I moved to Daphne du Maurier's "No Motive," which opens with these lines: "Mary Farren went into the gun room one morning about half-past eleven and took her husband's revolver and loaded it, then shot herself." Detective Black is called in. He digs for clues and finds them as he wends his way along an interesting path, finally discovering the real reason for Mary Farren's death. (Incidentally, the butler was indirectly responsible, and consequently "the butler did it" became a real in-joke with us for the rest of the semester.)

"No Motive" was longer than the other stories, so I serialized it, allowing time during class for the students to jot down evidence as it was revealed. I provided clue sheets on which they listed the evidence and possible motives for Mary Farren's suicide. At the start of each class, we had fun discussing their "possible motives." Du Maurier would have enjoyed hearing some of them, I'm sure.

When they finished reading the final part of the story, I had them write a report to John Farren based on the evidence they had collected on their sheets. The results showed they were getting better at catching clues. They were really learning to listen.

It was now time, I felt, to intro-

duce them to a couple of major detective fiction writers. First, Agatha Christie. I found a copy of *Witness for the Prosecution* in story form and started reading it aloud in class one day. At frequent intervals, I would stop reading and ask the students to assume that they were jurors and to vote "guilty" or "not guilty." Needless to say, considering the story, most of them changed their votes several times during the reading.

Afterward, I asked them in a short quiz to explain Romaine Heilger's scheme and to pick out the clue that enabled the lawyer to realize that the woman, "bent in figure, with a mass of untidy gray hair," was really Romaine Heilger. Most of them were able to do so. They were learning to listen carefully in order to catch clues and were now going one step further by figuring out how those clues fit together.

The English Department budget did not allow for the purchase of multiple copies of a Christie novel that year (I think I would have picked *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* if it had), but we did luck out on films. *Murder on the Orient Express,* based on Christie's book *Murder in the Calais Coach,* was playing in a local theater, and I was able to rent *Ten Little Indians* for $25 and run it in two 45-minute sessions at school.

So although we did not tackle a full-length novel, I did at least manage to give the class a fairly good introduction to a major detective-story writer whose name they will remember and possibly look up for further reading after graduation.

Next, I took them to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. (They had heard of Sherlock Holmes, but not Doyle.) I found a very simplified version of "The Red-Headed League" in play form. The students chose parts and read them aloud in class in about 20 minutes. This introduced them to Sherlock Holmes, his methods, and his sidekick, Watson. Then we dived right into "The Adventure of the Speckled Band." I read the beginning of the story, pointing out elements that it had in common with "The Red-Headed League" and helping them get acquainted with the English setting and characters.

I left them to read on their own at the point where Holmes and Watson ensconce themselves in a dark room at midnight to wait for the appearance of the deadly speckled band. Once again, they read because they wanted to read and they read quickly because they wanted to find out what happened.

But they had to read closely and accurately, too, because when they finished, I asked them to list 25 clues that led to the solution of the mystery. They gasped. Twenty-five! I assured them that they had heard me correctly, that 25 clues were right there in front of them, and I gave them copies of the story to work with. And they found the clues—by reading closely and carefully.

In fact, they were really getting good at it now. So I decided to give them a Sherlock Holmes mystery that with a little concentration they could actually solve themselves. I chose "The Man with the Twisted Lip." As I read aloud, they listened with pencil in hand and paper in front of them. I had told them to write down and hand in the solution the instant they thought of it. Several students got the solution as soon as the vital clue was given, and almost everyone had it before the end of the story. With that little success under their belts, the class felt quite friendly toward another major detective fiction writer.

Other writers helped further my objectives with these so-called reluctant readers. Ira Levin made his contribution with *Dr. Cook's Garden,* a good suspense play in which a young doctor plays amateur detective and almost becomes one of Dr. Cook's victims. And there was Melville Davisson Post's classic locked-room detective story, "The Doomdorf Mystery." We also read Patrick Quentin's "Puzzle for Poppy," the story of a wealthy, pregnant St. Bernard dog in danger of being done in for her money. The class had fun listing suspects and evidence in an effort to solve the mystery.

There were, of course, other activities interspersed along the way. We used a rate-building program for measuring and improving reading rates, which took about four minutes at the beginning of each class. We made up grid puzzles containing clues from various stories. Once I took them into an unfamiliar room and had them list 50 observations in 25 minutes. I also handed them pictures and had them list observations. Then I gave them copies of stories we had already read and asked for observations about characters, thus leading them to think about the people they had read about.

We looked at a copy of *Who Done It? An Encyclopedic Guide to Detective, Mystery, and Suspense Fiction* in the reference section of the library and tried to talk the librarian into putting identifying stickers on the mystery and detective fiction. Some days I loaded a cart with appealing mystery and detective stories and gave the class free reading time during the period. Many kids got hooked on books they started reading in these sessions, and I eventually had to set up an arrangement with the librarian so that I could check out library books from my own room. A few students even tried writing mysteries, and one story about a woman who hated lawnmowers was really pretty good.

Using mystery and detective fiction in the classroom was a new experience for me. The idea has my enthusiastic endorsement, for, with my reluctant readers, it worked very well indeed. □

World Teacher Power

By WILHELM EBERT
President, World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession; President, Bavarian Teachers Association.

We face a world suffering from schizophrenia. What people say they want and what they do often are inconsistent.

In the first place, teachers are expected to set examples, to be virtuous, honest, and democratic. As soon as they start to exercise these qualities in public through their organizations, however, they are considered politically and professionally destructive.

- When the teachers of Japan oppose the moral education program of their government because it smacks of the old days (before and during World War II), they are considered excessively political.
- When the teachers of Benin (formerly Dahomey) protest about the shooting of the minister of the interior, they are fired on, and their leaders are detained.
- When the teachers of Chile seek to express their collective views through their unions, the unions are banned.

In such a context, is it surprising that teachers in many countries are discontented, demanding that their organizations exercise more power?

On the other hand, in many countries, teachers and their organizations are an integral part of the social and political movement toward a truly national educational system. Is it surprising that in these cases, where teachers are actively involved with the national political forces, they hesitate to express criticism lest it be construed as outright opposition?

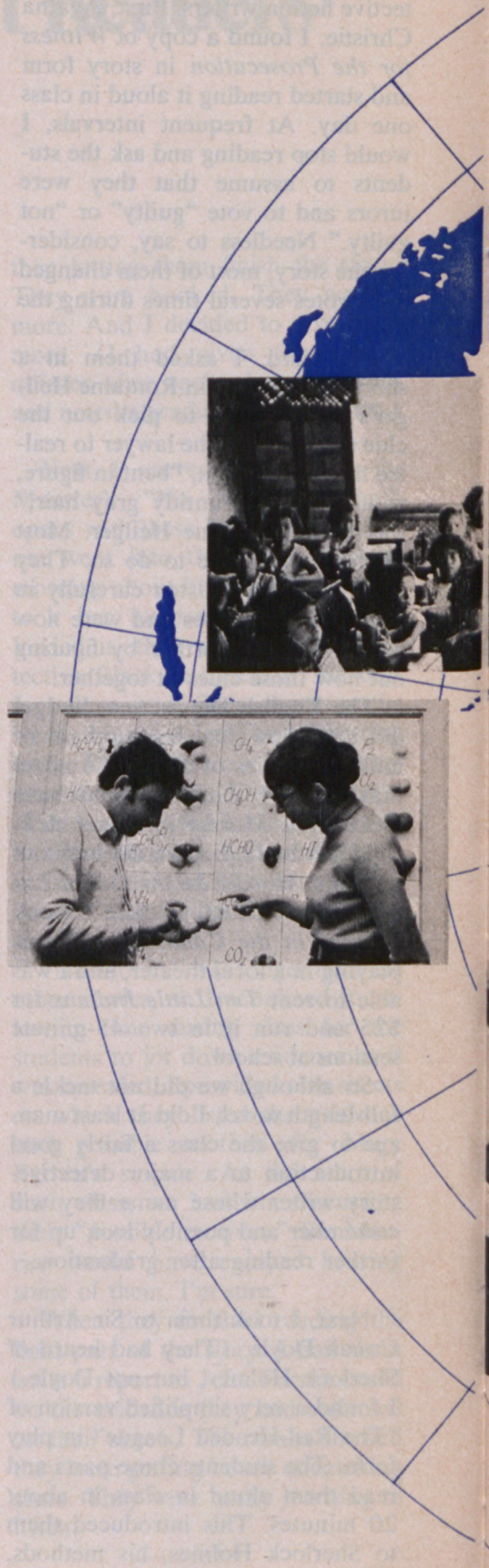
Clearly, in all the instances cited above, teachers organizations are politically involved, committed to bettering their societies. They are not partisan in their political actions, and they eschew servitude to the political objectives of parties or outside groups.

It is perhaps one of the greatest tragedies of our time that the political process has come to be considered morally dubious, when it should be the expression of common cause for the benefit of society.

Teachers around the world are willing to express this cause. This year, in Washington, our Assembly of the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession (WCOTP/CMOPE) was the most representative gathering of teachers ever held. Its theme was "Education for a Global Community." There we sought—and we continue to seek—the commitment of educators to promote international understanding and cooperation and the establishment of a world society capable of tackling the fundamental problems of the environment, population education, food production and distribution, and disarmament.

What are governments doing to create such a society? Governments extol human rights abroad while they crush them at home. Governments demand economic solidarity while private greed runs rampant.

People may say, "No one expected the world to be perfect. Educators must recognize inevitable realities." It's true—but today we



have reached a new level of disillusionment with international maneuvering.

We endeavor to teach our children—or to inspire them to learn—about the glories of honesty, integrity, democracy, international cooperation, and peace. But what do we find whenever we open a newspaper? Governments and international bodies are behaving dishonestly, undemocratically, selfishly, and with duplicity and hostility.

We as teachers deplore that every conceivable excuse is tolerated for not granting the basic human rights in many countries. We as teachers witness with deepest concern the United Nations, in which similar actions are condemned in some countries but ignored in others. It seems that some diplomats are just persons lying for the state, following the principle: *Get the formalities right and forget about the moralities.*

As teachers we cannot and will not accept selective moral indignation and selective justice. We must struggle against a world in which the rich are interdependent and the poor merely dependent. We must also struggle against a conspiracy of the majority in the United Nations. After all, the self-interest of the majority ought not necessarily be imposed on the world as though it were equitable and just.

We as teachers must react firmly to save the ideal of an organization seeking to bring the myriad common interests of humankind under one roof, where reason not weapons will dominate. As teachers we must make our own contribution to redefine international relations and improve the United Nations system.

The task of the WCOTP/CMOPE is to retain among its members their faith in the task they have accepted and to influence the world outside to correspond in some measure at least to the ideals for which they strive.

This means political action—for political action is not unprofessional. It is an inevitable consequence in a world which has exploited dedication and has itself denied the principles it expects its educators to uphold.

Governments of all political complexions extol education, proclaim it must have priority. At the same time, they deny this priority by the status they give their ministers of education (an office which, by the way, does not even exist in the United States).

Teachers are acclaimed as the guardian angels of the generations of tomorrow. At the same time they are denied any right to participate in the evolution and determination of educational policy.

Teachers have been passive for many years, but the teachers of today, and certainly their colleagues of tomorrow, are not prepared to be passive. They demand that education be given in reality the status it is accorded on paper, that teachers be given the real participation which all accept as needed but for which few provide.

Let there be no mistake. Reforms in education, innovations in methods and techniques, new systems of administration all will fail to make the desired impact on the education of today's young people if teachers are not actively involved in their elaboration and committed to their execution.

In this spirit, teachers organizations throughout the world demand the right to collective bargaining and to determine the conditions of service of their members. They seek this not out of self-interest but in the belief that unless teachers are satisfied and economically secure they will not be able to take their professional part in the society of today.

Let's look at the other side of this coin as well. If we are to demand such rights, teachers organizations must emphasize to their members that teachers are responsible for their own professional development. When our organizations demand rights, it must be for competent teachers serving the community, not for unconcerned teachers pursuing their own self-interest. Our responsibilities and our rights are equally important to us.

We teachers of the world have a long list of very complicated problems. In every case, they are the same problems that are faced by the communities we serve.

We need an interested and informed public if we are to produce solutions. Only in this way can we hope to build a better world at the national level and to promote the global community we seek. □

Mr. Ebert spoke at greater length on this topic before the National Press Club in Washington, DC, on August 6, 1976.

Pertinent NEA Resolutions

A-9. Organizations of Other Nations

The National Education Association believes that a strong international community of educators is necessary to promote international understanding and to defend the interests of the teaching profession in all countries. The Association actively supports the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession and will continue to cooperate with professional education organizations of other nations.

76-2. World Peace

The National Education Association recognizes the interdependence of all peoples and urges that the United States make every effort to strengthen the United Nations to make it a more effective instrument for world peace.

The Association urges its affiliates and members to implement its commitment to world peace founded on genuine respect for and understanding of individual and cultural diversity, and to develop programs that foster the types of education, including the study of additional languages, and goodwill that promote the ideals of peace, freedom, and human dignity.

Bad Boys' Chorus

By MARGARET J. HAMM
Music Teacher, Roosevelt Intermediate School, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

It was with a certain amount of trepidation that I finally called together 10 disruptive boys I had chosen from my 17 fifth grade music classes. But, I reasoned, if the boys really get out of hand I can pull the string on the "squawk box" and call for help.

I had pondered about these boys for several months. All were exceptionally good singers—if they were in the mood to sing instead of fight or tease or be just downright nasty. All spent almost as much time in 216 (our disciplinary office) as they did in class. Of course, that's an exaggeration; but each boy had often been in trouble.

So when the 10 appeared in my music room, each of them seemed a little apprehensive, too. I was frank: I explained that while they might not know each other, they had two things in common.

"You can all sing better than most of the others in your homerooms, but none of you behave well enough to be in Chorus," I said. (I have about 100 students who meet weekly to prepare for special programs. In addition to passing the tryouts, the students must have behaved acceptably for four weeks in their general music classes.)

The boys looked at one another. There were Pedro, smaller than average, whose front tooth was chipped in a fight; red-headed Tommy, with a temper to match his hair; Leon, much above average height, who inserted four-letter words in his constant flow of chatter; Edwin, who couldn't sit still in class and wouldn't open a song book; Angelo, another itchy one; Alfredo, Angelo's brother and just like him; Anthony, more mischievous than mean; David, amiable most of the time, but watch out if he got mad; Mitchell, who teased everyone and sometimes hurt others by spanking them with a stick; James, moody and uncooperative; and Miguel, overweight, a pincher and a poker.

"Well," I said, "we're here to sing, so let's start." And I began to play the introduction to a familiar song that was generally well liked. Almost timidly the boys joined me, first one, then another, until all were singing. And the sound was lovely. We switched to another familiar song, then a third.

"Let's learn a song that nobody else knows," was my next suggestion. The boys agreed, and we passed out the music books and began a swing song, "Mama Don't 'low No Guitar Playing Round Here." The boys really responded to it, and by the third time through, they could close the books and sing it from memory.

When the period ended, I complimented the boys on their behavior, which had been excellent, and on their singing, which *they* knew was exceptionally good, and told them I would call them again when I had some free time.

The next day, Leon greeted me in the hall with "Are you going to call for me today?" And at noon when I was on cafeteria duty, Tommy came running up to me to ask "Can we meet again tomorrow?"

It was two weeks before I was able to meet with the group again. This time I wasn't nervous at all, because in the general music class, each boy had shown a little improvement and a much more positive attitude toward me. And this time I brought my tape recorder.

We began with a two-part song I had introduced to their classes that week, a lovely song, modern but quiet. And, oh! what joy to see Tommy jump from his seat to help Angelo follow the notes, because the harmony was on a second staff.

After we had practiced both melody and harmony, I let each boy choose which part he wished to sing and then I taped the song. When we listened, James said, "It doesn't sound too good."

"I'll sing melody instead of background," said Anthony.

"So will I," Mitchell said, "but I really like that background part!"

So we practiced again and this time achieved better balance, but not too good a blend. "David is singing too loud, teacher," was Miguel's contribution. So we taped it over again, and this time the boys were satisfied.

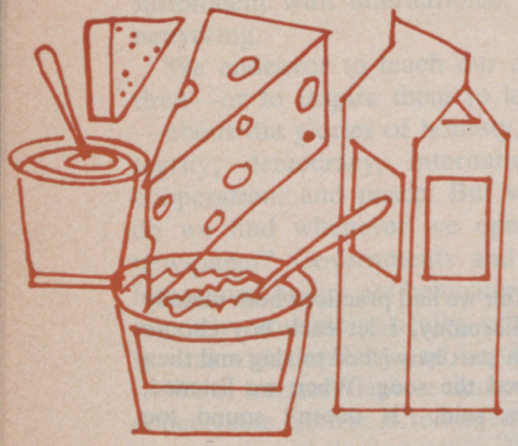
One interesting thing to me was the fact that if anyone had told David he was singing too loudly in general music class, he would have gotten up and punched the person.

Although I wish I could say that all 10 boys became angels by the end of the year, I can't. But as I made out the grades for their report cards, I realized that they had all been behaving better in their own classes and that their grades for the required objectives were B's and C's instead of D's.

Edwin still doesn't want to use his music book, and he spoke to me angrily because I hadn't had time to meet their "group" again before school closed. Tommy has been no trouble in class at all, but he still fights in the cafeteria if someone arouses his anger.

And so on with them all. Each still has not really resolved his problem, but all are finding more joy in music and are proud of their ability to sing well together and, I'm sure, of their growing self-control.

I'm happy, too, with my "Bad Boys' Chorus," and I intend to keep it going. Then maybe some of the boys will develop enough pride in themselves and enough self-control to join my larger chorus and sing for assemblies and gain the recognition they so obviously need. □



Nutrition Education in the Elementary School

By JOHN E. EISENHAUER
Head Teacher/Third Grade Teacher, Penns Valley Elementary School, Spring Mills, Pennsylvania, and
PAUL E. BELL
School Nutrition Education Curriculum Study, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park.

What does nutrition have to do with basic skills or in-service? To start finding out, first try your hand at this quiz; then see how one school district translated some of the answers into instructional action.

Quiz

True or False?

Q. Americans are well nourished.

A. True—but! Most Americans eat plenty of food. In fact, a common nutrition problem for many is overeating. And, according to recent nutrition surveys, some groups —such as the poor, the elderly, pregnant women, and preschool children—show a high prevalence of various nutrition deficiencies.

Q. Students' work is influenced by what they eat.

A. True. Better nutrition can reduce the apathy and fatigue of students who haven't been getting adequate diets. It can improve their attendance, too.

Q. Storage and preparation don't affect the nutrients in a food.

A. False. Food is food, but a given amount of a particular food doesn't always contain a fixed amount of nutrients. Certain preparation and storage processes cause loss of some nutrients in some foods.

Q. Kids learn all they need to know about nutrition from their health and home economics lessons.

A. False. There are several problems here. First, many students, especially boys, don't take home economics courses. Second, those who do take home economics may get little instruction in nutrition because other topics are covered in great detail in the course. Health classes, too, can give only part of their time to nutrition.

Q. There is little time in the school day for teaching another subject, like nutrition.

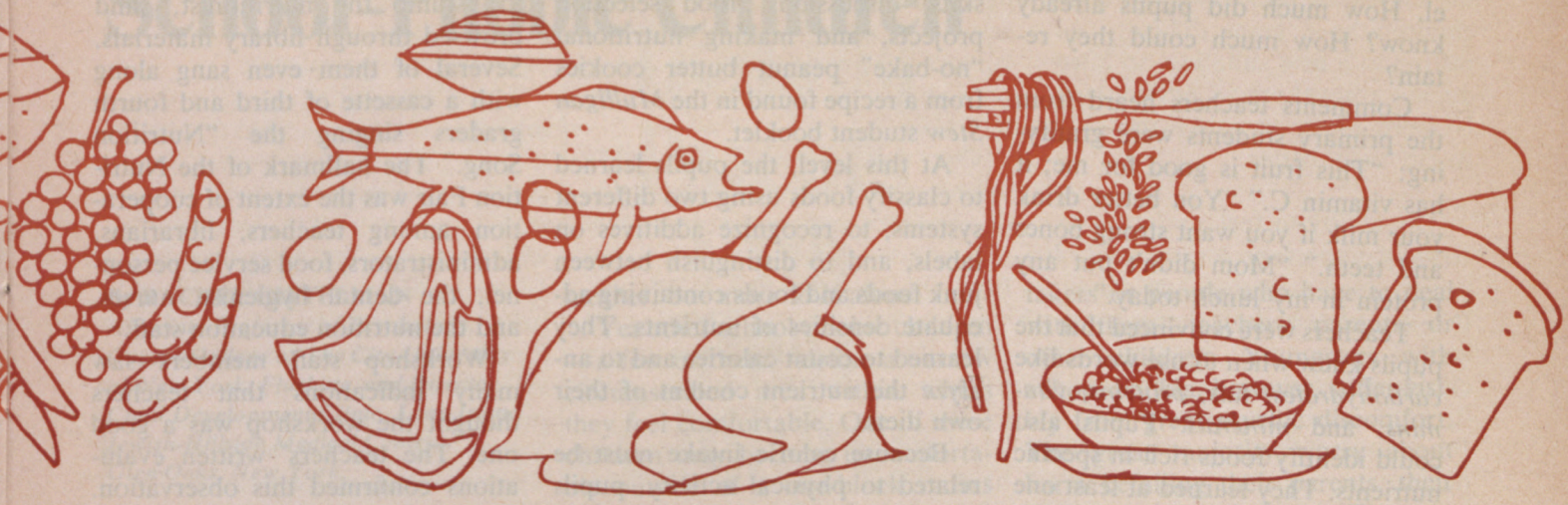
A. True—if you have to budget separate time. Reading, writing, mathematics, and other skills and concepts, however, can be learned by using nutrition examples, materials, and projects. Information on nutrition can be integrated into social studies, art, music, science, and physical education, too.

Q. You can't find the truth about nutrition claims anywhere.

A. True *and* false. There is no officially designated nutrition high court that judges such claims, but there are many sources of information. The following places provide dependable information to anyone interested.

- The Nutrition Information and Resource Center, Beecher-Dock House, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16802.
- The Food and Nutrition Information and Educational Materials Center, The National Agricultural Library, Beltsville, MD 20705.
- The Nutrition Foundation, Inc., Office of Education and Public Affairs, 888 17th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20006.
- American Dietetic Association, 430 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago 60611.
- Federal Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 14th Street and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20250.

Q. Nutrition lessons aren't available for me to work into my instructional plans.



A. False. The National Dairy Council (6300 North River Road, Rosemont, IL 60018) has some, and the School Nutrition Education Curriculum Study is collecting and developing examples of lessons that combine nutrition with other subjects. (The address of the School Nutrition Education Curriculum Study is 205 Beecher House, University Park, PA 16802.) Ideas and materials for lessons are also available from the Federal Extension Service and in the *Journal of Nutrition Education* and the *Illinois Teacher of Home Economics* (Home Economics Education Division, University of Illinois, Urbana 61801).

Q. Teachers aren't prepared to teach nutrition.

A. True, with the exception of home economics teachers. But several agencies are developing teacher preparatory programs.

These questions and their answers suggest challenges like the following. Many people choose food for its convenience rather than for the nutrition it provides. Among those people are children four or five years old who are making daily food choices without parental supervision.

How can the trend toward inadequate nutrition be stopped? The school-sponsored food service can help, but what about the way students eat when they are not in the school? They themselves must know how to make choices.

Some teachers at the Penns Valley Elementary School in Spring Mills, Pennsylvania, set out to meet this challenge. The initial step came when people from the School Nutrition Education Curriculum Study and the Penns Valley School District got together to talk about the idea of a joint nutrition project. As a result, five elementary teachers and two nurses from the district attended a summer workshop in nutrition education.

The participants learned that good nutrition was not being systematically taught to elementary children. They found, too, that many popular foods cannot easily be classified according to the Basic Four Food Groups. A different approach was needed.

They decided to look at the fundamental nutrients found in the various foods rather than to classify them into groups. They developed teaching units and learning centers and asked nutritionists to check their work for accuracy.

Although the content of the units emphasizes science and health, some are designed to be used in teaching language arts, mathematics, art, music, or social studies.

When school opened in the fall of 1975, the workshop participants took back the new ideas and techniques to share with students and colleagues. During the summer they had written a unit on "Nutrition and You" for third grade students. Now, working with five other primary teachers, they expanded it and adapted it for use by a team of teachers. They then presented it to 140 pupils in the first, second, and third grades.

The pupils, organized into five groups, rotated from teacher to teacher, spending three sessions with each. Each teacher specialized in one of the following nutrients—carbohydrates, proteins, fats, minerals, or vitamins.

Since the material had never been used before, the teachers were not sure it would actually succeed. They had no idea which skills and con-

cepts should be taught at which level. How much did pupils already know? How much could they retain?

Comments teachers heard from the primary students were gratifying: "This fruit is good for me; it has vitamin C." "You better drink your milk if you want strong bones and teeth." "Mom didn't put any protein in my lunch today."

Teachers were convinced that the pupils knew when to use words like *carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins,* and *minerals.* Pupils also could identify foods rich in specific nutrients. They learned at least one body function served by each nutrient and how much of each nutrient children their age need. They obviously could distinguish between the concepts *nutrients* and *food.*

Teachers used games to give pupils practice in choosing nutrients. Each nutrient was represented by a different geometric symbol such as a diamond, square, circle, or star. Pupils matched symbols or supplied missing symbols. These symbols were used in lessons for individual study as well.

To culminate the unit, pupils planned, prepared, and ate a "unique breakfast"—peanut-butter pancakes and carrot-oatmeal cookies, along with many of the more common breakfast dishes. Interest was high. Nutrition education in the primary grades was on its way.

While the primary unit was being initiated, another workshop participant interested three intermediate teachers in nutrition education. This group began their work by presenting a short introductory unit—their own version of "Nutrition and You."

Once a week for eight weeks, 120 fifth and sixth grade pupils watched the TV series *Mulligan Stew.* (This series may be available on film or videotape from your county Cooperative Extension Service.) During the Mulligan Stew Hour following each program, they participated in skits, discussions, food selection projects, and making nutritional "no-bake" peanut butter cookies from a recipe found in the *Mulligan Stew* student booklet.

At this level, the pupils learned to classify foods using two different systems, to recognize additives on labels, and to distinguish between junk foods and foods containing adequate densities of nutrients. They learned to count calories and to analyze the nutrient content of their own diets.

Because caloric intake must be related to physical activity, pupils learned how to balance intake against activity needs. Using cutout pictures of foods, they showed how to choose foods so as to balance nutrients in meals.

Teachers and lesson writers were happily surprised that primary and intermediate students could make such progress in learning nutrition details.

The faculty involved in this project sensed that other staff members were interested, so one of the teachers asked administrators about devoting a scheduled elementary in-service workshop to nutrition. The administrators were pleased with the interest being shown; they provided support for planning meetings as well as for the workshop itself.

Eight teachers—a cross section of the elementary staff—and the school's dental hygienist made up a steering committee. Only four of them had attended the summer workshop. This committee planned and organized an in-service workshop that would stimulate interest in nutrition education, provide information on the subject, and suggest instructional techniques.

After a brief introduction, the 64 workshop participants explored learning stations set up as a fair. They previewed films, played games, worked through learning centers, sampled snacks, collected recipes, gathered free materials and resource listings, viewed slides, tried to "stump the nutritionist," and browsed through library materials. Several of them even sang along with a cassette of third and fourth graders singing the "Nutrition Song." The hallmark of the Nutrition Fair was the extent of cooperation among teachers, librarians, administrators, food service personnel, the dental hygienist, nurses, and the nutrition education staff.

Workshop staff members saw many indications that teachers thought the workshop was a good one. The teachers' written evaluations confirmed this observation. Out of 34 completing the evaluation, 31 indicated that the workshop interested them in the subject.

When asked to compare this in-service program with others they'd attended, 33 rated it "good or very good." Thirty-two teachers said they were interested in helping prepare future in-service programs.

When these teachers returned to their classrooms, they added to the information they had gained. For example, some developed new units on various aspects of nutrition education.

Other people became directly or indirectly involved in the project—a student teacher, 12 university student aides, two school nurses, a dental hygienist, six parents, and several other local resource people.

This whole nutrition education program is the result of seven staff members' attending a summer workshop. Through their efforts and those of others who were ultimately drawn into the project, hundreds of people have been introduced to nutrition education.

The Penns Valley program is just beginning. It still has many new avenues to explore. But one thing is certain—teachers can make good things happen. Using nutrition education, they have shown that they can help change the curriculum and integrate new material into the existing instructional program. □

School-Phobic Children

By RACHEL GITTELMAN
Associate Professor of Psychology, Queens College of The City University of New York, Flushing, and Director, Child Development Clinic, Long Island Jewish-Hillside Medical Center, Glen Oaks, New York.

It is usually easy to distinguish between truants and school-phobic children. Truants are often involved in antisocial behavior. When out of school, they roam the streets, enjoying their freedom.

In contrast, school-phobic children remain at home—avoid staying out. Their distress is marked, not just in school but on the way there as well. Along with anxiety, they're likely to suffer various psychophysiological symptoms, such as malaise, nausea, stomach pains, pallor, vomiting.

When put in any situation that demands separation from home or parents, the vast majority of school-phobic children experience various degrees of anxiety, from mild discomfort to outright panic. These youngsters refuse to go to camp, to sleep overnight at friends' homes, to go shopping by themselves, and to stay home alone. Some are able to go out freely provided their mothers remain at home accessible to them. These children will not tolerate the mother's absence when they themselves are at home, however.

Exactly the opposite pattern may occur; the child may display anxiety when away from the home rather than away from the mother. Such a child feels comfortable and free of anxiety while at home but feels anxious away from home—even when accompanied by the mother, but more so if alone.

Yet other school-phobic children —a few of them—define a narrow circumscribed area within which they feel comfortable. One of these children may become uncomfortable outside of a one-block radius of home, for example.

In the most extreme cases, the children refuse all situations that involve separation from the mother. They must always be in her presence.

These patterns are recognized manifestations of separation anxiety, which is the crucial, central difficulty in school-phobic children. (Some children are afraid of going to school but do not seem to be particularly vulnerable to separation. These children, almost exclusively older adolescent youngsters, are clearly in the minority.)

School-phobic children are anxious not only when they are in a feared situation but also when they anticipate the situation. Thus the children are uncomfortable not only in the school but also at the thought of being there. Hence, in addition to the primary separation anxiety, they develop marked anticipatory anxiety and will refuse to attempt to go to school.

This anticipatory fear varies in severity. Some children will refuse to get dressed to go to school; others will do so easily but will refuse to start for school; still others will walk to school with a parent and then refuse to go in.

Most children who are brought for help to mental health clinics are not in anguish; they are simply creating difficulties for their caretakers or people who have to deal with them—teachers, parents, or other children. Youngsters with school phobia, however, suffer visibly from great psychic discomfort. The great majority worry about harm befalling their parents, their siblings, or even their pets. They are unusually anxious about robbers, muggers, car accidents, illnesses. Some are concerned about their own well-being and worry about being kidnapped or getting lost from their parents.

Most school-phobic children are aware that these feelings are irrational. Few make any sustained, serious attempt to justify their symptoms. Most victims of school phobia formerly enjoyed a satisfactory adjustment to life. They can recall their symptom-free life and recognize that they are different from their previous selves and from their normal peers.

Because of this objectivity and insight, the children are doubly miserable—not only anxious but worried because they're anxious. Their irrational fears challenge their self-esteem.

In school-phobic children, it is important to recognize that separation anxiety is the major difficulty —that the anticipatory anxiety is secondary. An alternative reading of the situation—erroneous in my view—is to think of the school as a specific feared situation that is the major source of the child's difficulty. Those who act on this latter assumption often try to make the school seem more benign and less demanding. They transfer school-phobic children to "easier classes," for example. →

Actually, this is exactly what should not be done: School-phobic children have great difficulty adjusting to a new situation, so introducing a novel school environment is more likely to make the child worse than better.

The ability to feel anxiety is extremely important for survival: It was evolved as a signal of danger. It is not anxiety itself that is pathological or abnormal, but some specific manifestations of it which seem to limit an individual's ability to function in a flexible, self-actualizing way.

Let's apply this line of thinking to separation anxiety. Some people have argued that the anxiety a young baby feels when the mother is not present (separation anxiety) is instinctive rather than learned: When the child is uncomfortable and cries, this behavior elicits caring behavior by the mother. Observations of animal behavior support this view.

If separation anxiety is a normal, adaptive mechanism, this function may become disrupted for a variety of reasons not necessarily related to internal psychic conflict. After all, all functions which are biologically regulated—for example, appetite or sleep patterns or smiling—can become dysregulated.

The reasons why a particular child develops a pathological form of separation anxiety are unfortunately unclear. The symptoms may result from the combination of a vulnerable biological state and a particular type of mother-child interaction.

One theory is that the child's symptoms are primarily a reflection of a parent's anxiety. Evidence that this is not entirely the case arises from the fact that the child's distress can be lessened by treating the child alone—that it isn't necessary to somehow immunize the child against the mother's anxiety.

At Hillside Medical Center, we have conducted a controlled, experimental study of the use of medication (imipramine) with school-phobic children.

The federal Food and Drug Administration has approved the marketing of imipramine for treatment of depression in adults and enuresis in children. Additional experimental studies like our own may eventually cause FDA to approve marketing it for treatment of school phobia. But, until that time, the drug will be available to such children only experimentally.

In our study, we found imipramine effective in the alleviation of separation anxiety but not of anticipatory anxiety. Once in school, the treated children remained anxiety-free. However, they would still initially refuse to enter situations which they expected to prove uncomfortable. If medication can thus alter the child's adaptation, it is probably because it affects a deviant psychobiological state.

Clinicians dislike using a drug for a disorder that so often responds to a simple maneuver such as forcing the child back to school. In our study, we only used the imipramine with those who had been completely unresponsive to intensive efforts, sustained for at least two weeks, to force them back to school. In our view, it seems judicious to use imipramine only when nonpharmacological methods fail altogether or when the child is very anxious although attending school.

The treatment of severe school phobia is best carried out under the supervision of a therapist, often a mental health specialist in a local clinic. The teacher's role in obtaining treatment for a child is limited to referring the youngster to the appropriate school staff person—perhaps a guidance counselor or school psychologist. That specialist, in turn, may be able to provide the parents with the name of a nearby clinic, or the parents may be referred to a specialist by the child's pediatrician.

Once the therapist is engaged, the treatment will consist of a joint effort by the child, the teacher, and the parent. Each plays an indispens-

(Continued on page 91)

The immediate goal is to get the school-phobic child back in the classroom. In most cases, this cannot be done suddenly, so the child is led through incremental steps, each one bringing the child closer to complete school return. Below is a description of how one boy was treated with this tactic combined with medication. (A similar program for desensitizing the child to school can also be set up without the use of medication.) When the doctor first saw him, the child was totally unable to enter the school.

Week 1: Imipramine treatment initiated. Child stayed in guidance counselor's office with mother for one hour a day.

Week 2, Days 1-2: Child and mother visited class, then child returned to guidance counselor's office and stayed there alone. Mother picked him up after one hour.

Days 3 and 4: Child and mother stayed in class for one hour.

Day 5: Child stayed alone in class for 30 minutes while mother was in counselor's office.

Week 3, Days 1 and 2: Mother accompanied child to class. He stayed alone in class for 45 minutes. Mother waited outside the school.

Days 3 and 4: Same as above, but for two hours.

Day 5: Same as Day 4, but for the whole day. Mother returned home. (Child was upset when mother left him, but fine after she was gone.)

Week 4, Days 1 and 2: Father took child to class; mother picked him up. Child stayed in class all day. (Mother was replaced by father, for whom child's attachment is less marked.)

Days 3, 4, and 5: Father brought child to class. After school, child took the bus home.

Week 5: Child went to school and returned by himself.

The above is an example of a smooth, easy progression. In most cases, however, fluctuations occur.

Helping Parents with Their Children

By CHRISTINE Y. O'CONNELL
Assistant Professor, Department of Special Education, College of Education, Arizona State University, Tempe.

Many parents need help in dealing with their children and would welcome the chance to belong to a group organized for this purpose. But is it the school's responsibility to organize such groups? My answer is a firm Yes. Why? Because I have talked with parents who either cannot afford counseling services or who are timid about seeking them, and I realize our society offers very little in the way of parent training. The facts speak out clearly: If the schools close their doors to parents who are seeking help, these parents may not seek the help elsewhere.

Parents find that the support they receive from a group is most comforting. I have seen many a parent enter a group nervous and upset, then literally sigh with relief halfway through the meeting when he or she realizes that the other parents are having similar (or worse) problems with child rearing.

This realization is especially valuable to parents who are single or whose spouses are unsupportive. Valuable, too, is the opportunity a parent group may give a parent to help someone else. A mother who has spent her time going from one mental health center to another, wondering all the time just how disturbed she is, will find that helping someone else can be quite an ego booster.

For two years I worked as a "parent educator" for a university-affiliated agency. During that time I saw many parents grow in their abilities to understand their own feelings, to understand their children, to change their behavior and that of their children, and to relate to and help others. It's rewarding to see a parent slowly change from an unhappy, self-derogatory, and uncertain individual to one who is confident and proud and striving to help others feel the same.

When a school does opt to provide some parent services, flexibility is the key to success. In some schools, for example, counselors or social workers take on the parent program. In other schools, it's a teacher or a group of teachers. (I've seen principals and psychologists become quite involved as well.)

Ideally, the person to work with parents through the school should be someone who knows a lot not only about child rearing but also about education. This person should be a resource to teachers and parents alike. In the future, schools may hire "parent educators" for this express function.

I hope I haven't conveyed the impression that parents are beating at the doors of the school to get help, because sometimes parents are apathetic about joining groups. In fact, parent motivation can be a serious problem.

In order to get parents interested in a group, leaders might send them a brochure or newsletter with information about meetings and topics under consideration for discussion. Even if discipline is a primary concern in the school (which is likely), group leaders will want to announce other topics as lead-ins. Subjects that usually interest parents are child development, tutoring, health and medical concerns, new educational developments, mental retardation, autism, learning disabilities, and giftedness. Often, if only the group leaders can get parents to come out to one or two meetings, they become hooked and will join the group.

Some schools establish reinforcement systems to encourage parents to participate in these groups. A number reward parents (educational games for use with their children, say) for participation. Others provide parents with bus fare and pay for their babysitters. For many parents, a session with a counselor or teacher who gives them undivided attention may in itself be highly reinforcing.

Before the first meeting with parents, group leaders will need to plan their sessions carefully. They will also want to learn how to facilitate communication and keep the group on task. Since a few people may try to change the topic of the session, monopolize the conversation, or be hesitant to speak, leaders will find it helpful to anticipate strategies for redirecting the conversation or

It is the school's responsibility to help parents do a good job of rearing their children.

switching topics and for getting everyone in the group involved in the discussion.

While one article could not possibly fully prepare anyone to work with parents, some guidelines should be helpful.

At the first meeting, leaders will want to do the following:

1. Give parents a chance to talk.
2. Provide an opportunity for them to establish, clarify, or modify the objectives for the group.
3. Assess parent and family strengths and weaknesses (a questionnaire may be helpful).
4. Informally assess skill levels of the parents in order to choose appropriate reading materials for individuals in the group.

Thereafter, leaders will find the group will progress smoothly if they remember a few rules.

1. Vary the tone and pace of the meetings, depending on the concerns and feelings of the group.
2. Don't be intimidated by the parents.
3. Don't impose goals on the group.
4. Don't assume people in the group are talking about the same behavior just because they use the same terms (unhappy, tantrums, threats, not communicating, etc.). Have people define their terms.
5. Don't give out magic solutions. Rather, help parents learn to weigh alternatives and to make decisions.
6. Transmit expertise and skills to parents.
7. Teach them a "process" so that later they can apply problem-solving techniques to new situations.
8. Give many concrete examples of the child-rearing techniques introduced in the class.
9. Pay attention to the successes the parents are having.
10. Help parents to become aware of the many positive things that happen with their children.

Of course, the list could go on and on. I frequently find it helpful to talk about the mistakes I have made with children. This lets parents know that I am human, too, and that making a mistake is not fatal.

I also point out the humor in many situations involving children. I find that humor, handled in the right way, can strengthen the interaction within a group as well as provide some relief from the intensity of the problems discussed.

Teachers, counselors, psychologists, or other school officials may have a group but feel unqualified to handle all the issues that come before them. These leaders should remember that they can be effective without providing answers for all problems. Sometimes parents simply crave a listener.

At times I have said to a parent, "I want you to try this. I've seen it work in the past and I really think it will work for you." I have also said, "Tell your husband (mother, wife, grandmother, aunt) that Dr. O'Connell, who has had lots of experience with children, says this will probably work and we should try it." And I have said, "I feel you should be talking to someone else —that's not my area of expertise." Then, sometimes I will listen to a complex problem and rephrase what the parent has said. Or I will ask the parent to observe the situation more closely for the next week.

Leaders in this sensitive area must remain flexible in the techniques and procedures they use with groups. Practice and experience make this easier and easier. But leaders shouldn't assume that they must always have a Band-Aid ready —that's not their job or responsibility. It is the school's responsibility, however, to help parents do a good job of rearing children. □

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Right-Brained Kids in Left-Brained Schools

By **MADELINE HUNTER**
Principal, University Elementary School, Graduate School of Education, University of California, Los Angeles.

"Why should I read the directions? I can *see* how it goes together!" This statement has baffled many a teacher as a student confronted a bewildering array of pieces. And the student *could* "see" how it went together, while seemingly more able classmates struggled through decoding "attach narrow end of part A to rounded side of part B" in order to ferret out the knowledge that would guide their actions.

The same student would protest, "Don't tell me how to get there, draw me a map," while his or her bewildered teacher would plead, "Don't show me a map, just *tell* me how to get there."

In the past such different ways of thinking, ways of remembering ("I don't remember what he said, but I can describe the room we were in" v. "I don't remember where we were, but I can tell you what he said") and ways of attacking problems ("Let's lay it out on paper" v. "Let's talk about it") have been explained by dumping those variations in the "people-are-different" basket. Now research has begun to sort the contents of that basket into the categories of left- and right-brained thinking with promising and productive suggestions for teachers that could accelerate student learning in and out of the classroom.

Research in hemisphericity indicates that humans have two brains (hemispheres), each complete in itself. Unlike animals, human beings, at an early age, begin to differentiate the data processed by each of their brains. Their left hemispheres "specialize" in data whose significance is based in relationships that are built across time. You are using your left hemisphere as you relate what you are now reading to what you read in the previous paragraph and what you will read in the next paragraph. The left hemisphere has been called the *temporal* or *propositional "if-then" brain* because it perceives significance and relationships across time.

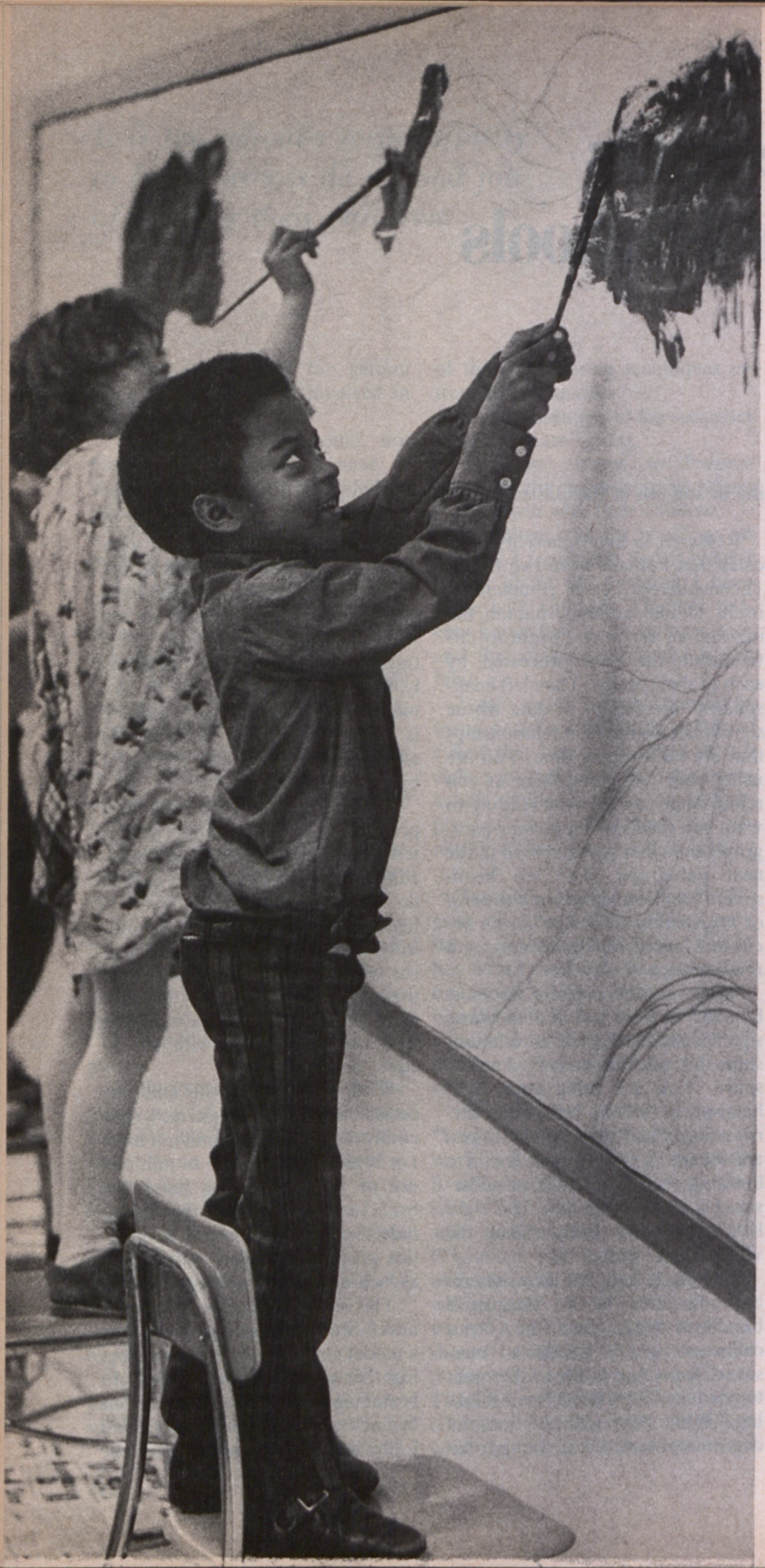
The right hemisphere in most humans "specializes" in data whose significance emerges from relationships that must be perceived across space. You are using your right hemisphere when, from the surrounding visual environment, you are aware of where you are in a building, recognize a face, or understand a chart or graph. The right hemisphere has been called the *visual-spatial brain.*

The right and left hemispheres are connected by an impressive bundle of nerve fibers, the corpus callosum, which transmits "messages" from one brain to the other to produce "integrated brain thinking." While "brainedness" does not determine handedness, an approximate analogy is that we have "assigned" certain responsibilities to our hands (holding the book with the left hand while we point to the word or turn the page with the right hand). No matter how able we are with the right hand, we do most things more effectively and efficiently if we also use the left. In like manner, integrated brain thinking is the result of each hemisphere's augmenting information processed by the other.

Individuals may be born with a predisposition to use their right or left brains; however, as with handedness, practice has a great deal to do with skill. (Witness the right-handed pianists who play beautifully with their left hands, the typists who make no more errors with their left hands than they do with their rights, or the craftspersons who use both hands with almost equal dexterity.)

Without practice, skills and processes can become stagnant, so the comfort of using the dominant hand (or brain) often results in minimal use of the subordinate hand (or brain). Consequently, the ineptitude that results from lack of practice is often incorrectly interpreted as lack of inherent ability.

This seems to be true of "brainedness." Students who can "see" how a model airplane, for example, goes together use their more facile right brains and may not give their left brains the practice of reading and following the directions for the



model. Students who comfortably read and comprehend complex instructions use their left brains and may not give their right brains the practice of seeing how the parts go together.

The assumption that practice could be as important as native ability is supported by current research which indicates that measured IQ can change with prescribed changes in experience. In no way, however, should these statements be construed as indicating that all difference in human performance is the result of experience. We still can't make all learners equal.

Hemisphericity plays an important role in the selection of occupations and hobbies. The architect, design engineer, accountant, farmer, artist, and musician must deal comfortably with visual-spatial data. The philosopher, theoretician, and sales specialist ("If I do this, then the customer will buy that") must handle temporal data well and synthesize those data across time into an idea or understanding. Some people are facile with both hemispheres (the Leonardo da Vincis of the world), and everyone uses both brains to varying degrees unless, because of an accident, stroke, or surgery, only one is functioning.

For years, researchers studied the relationship of the left and right brains to learning only in connection with medical cases involving brain damage. It was from study of the pathology related to damage to one brain or to the severing of the corpus callosum that much of what we now know of hemisphericity emerged.

Of equal importance, an example of right-hemisphere activity is shown on the facing page, and an example of left-hemisphere activity is shown above.

Recently, hemispheric implications have been the subject of scrutiny by educators who were looking for more efficient and effective ways of promoting learning and for ways of remediating the learning of those obviously able youngsters who were not "getting it." The findings from that scrutiny powerfully suggest that schools have been beaming most of their instruction through a left-brained input (reading and listening) and output (talking and writing) system, thereby handicapping all learners.

Students who learn well through left-brained input have had minimal or haphazard practice in using their right brains. Those who learn more easily with right-brained input have been handicapped by having to use

primarily their left brains without the opportunity of processing the same information through their more proficient right hemispheres.

Educators and brain researchers are beginning to suspect that the girl who did well in algebra but almost flunked geometry and the boy who knew everything about a carburetor but couldn't pass the written test on carburetion systems were both victims of our lack of understanding of hemisphericity—that they are mirror images of the same phenomenon and may represent *our* default in understanding rather than theirs.

Now what do all these findings mean to educators in the conduct of day-to-day schooling? First, they clearly mandate the responsibility for presenting information in such a way that students can practice integrating it from both of their hemispheres.

Second, these findings suggest that whenever a student is not "getting it," teachers should augment the stimulus they are already using with one to the other hemisphere.

Third, the findings indicate that teachers should adopt practices that could increase students' facility in the use of each hemisphere singly and in concert.

Teachers need not indulge in elaborate diagnosis to determine which brain a learner prefers. Rather, they can achieve the above three objectives by trying the following strategies.

Presenting information simultaneously to both hemispheres. Doing an example on the chalkboard while giving a verbal explanation or having a model perform the act while others are hearing the directions are possibilities. Successful teachers have been using this technique for years, but only recently have we known why the dual input of "seeing it" as well as "reading or hearing about it" was so productive.

Augmenting a stimulus by following it with information beamed to the opposite hemisphere when the student is not "getting it." Obviously, hemisphericity is only one of many reasons for learning difficulties. Changing hemispheric input systems, however, can diminish and often remediate a learning problem. For example, a teacher might first say, "Find it on the map" and then say, "Tell me what the map shows." Or the teacher might begin by asking, "If we put it on a time line, where would it be?" and then follow up by saying, "If we translated the time line into words, we would say. . . ."

A teacher might also ask students to transfer past learning to give added meaning to a present class activity. For example, in teaching descriptive writing, a teacher might ask students "to see in their minds" a party they had enjoyed and to use words to describe how people at the party looked and what they did. The reverse of this process occurs when a teacher asks students to supply an example from their own past experience that would match $9 \times 5 = 45$. Imaging from past experience not only augments left-brained activity but also enables the teacher to check the accuracy and validity of the students' perception and understanding of the present learning.

Deliberately beaming to only one hemisphere to give students practice in processing one type of information. For example, (a) "Look at the diagram and see if you can figure it out," (b) "See if you can find five triangles in this design," (c) "Listen to my directions and see if you can make the figure I am describing," (d) "Read the chapter and answer the questions," and (e) "Look at this sequence of three pictures and draw what the fourth might be."

Schools have long realized the importance of augmenting the written or spoken word with pictures, diagrams, graphs, etc. As technology advanced, more sophisticated audio (left-brained) and visual (right-brained) materials became available to teachers. Unfortunately, however, audiovisual became an end in itself with millions of dollars being spent on materials that in some cases were poorly designed, ineffectively executed, and unintelligently used.

With the advent of television, which is primarily a right-brained input system augmented by the temporal (left-brained) input of speech, the whole world is able to receive information without the complex left-brained processing that reading demands. Therefore, predominantly right-brained individuals can take their proper place in the sun by also knowing about and understanding both current issues and humanity's past. Information about the Arab-Israeli conflict, for example, is no longer privileged communication for left-brained individuals who read about it; right-brained individuals can find out about the conflict through the primarily visual medium of television.

What is our final responsibility as educators? We must, of course, follow the paths of the researchers, translating their findings into classroom practice as soon as we are able. In that translation, we must make available to all teachers, in language they can understand, strategies that they can use effectively and comfortably in their classrooms regardless of budget, organizational scheme, materials available, or pupil-teacher ratio. We also must generate questions and concerns that will focus researchers on areas most conducive to student learning.

Finally, we must practice what we preach and develop left-brained and right-brained input of information, modeling by our own behavior the fact that neither brain is superior to the other, neither is the chosen one, both are essential to integrated thinking. If we acknowledge the right of all students to learn, this world will be a better, more accepting, more stimulating, and more fulfilling place for everyone. □

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AN IN-SERVICE PROGRAM FOR TEACHERS

The Teacher as a Student of Teaching

By VITO PERRONE
Dean, Center for Teaching and Learning,
University of North Dakota,
Grand Forks.

This article by Dr. Perrone discusses the development of an in-service program for teachers that encourages them "to rely more on their personal resources and on those of their colleagues than on any other resource." Following the article are statements by three educators who have been involved in the program—Richard Hovda and Dorothy Finken, classroom teachers, and Donald L. Rollie, formerly of the North Dakota Education Association.

". . . successful teaching stems from the teacher's desire for self-fulfillment rather than from his mastery of a collection of techniques." —Philip Jackson.

That so many teachers have survived as learners, growing personally and professionally, is remarkable and is more often a tribute to their individual initiative and perseverance than to any particular design of school systems, colleges, universities, or state education agencies.

Some school administrators may protest the foregoing, suggesting that in-service education is an item of high priority in their districts. And colleges and universities, as well as state education agencies, may likewise feel that they carry on creative in-service programs for teachers.

I will not deny that good intentions abound, that often the programs presented are stimulating. But I will argue that the capacity of such activities, even when they are well done, to alter in any significant manner the nature of teachers' classroom practices or their knowledge of ways to extend children's learning is relatively small. In large measure this is true because most in-service activities are too general to be helpful. Typically they are organized by groups that make decisions about learning activities *they* believe teachers need, groups such as school administrators, colleges and universities, and state education agencies.

More positive in-service/staff development directions are possible—ones that could enhance teachers' enthusiasm for learning and their confidence in their capacity to function as professionals. But before suggesting alternatives for stimulating teacher growth, I want to state two assumptions:

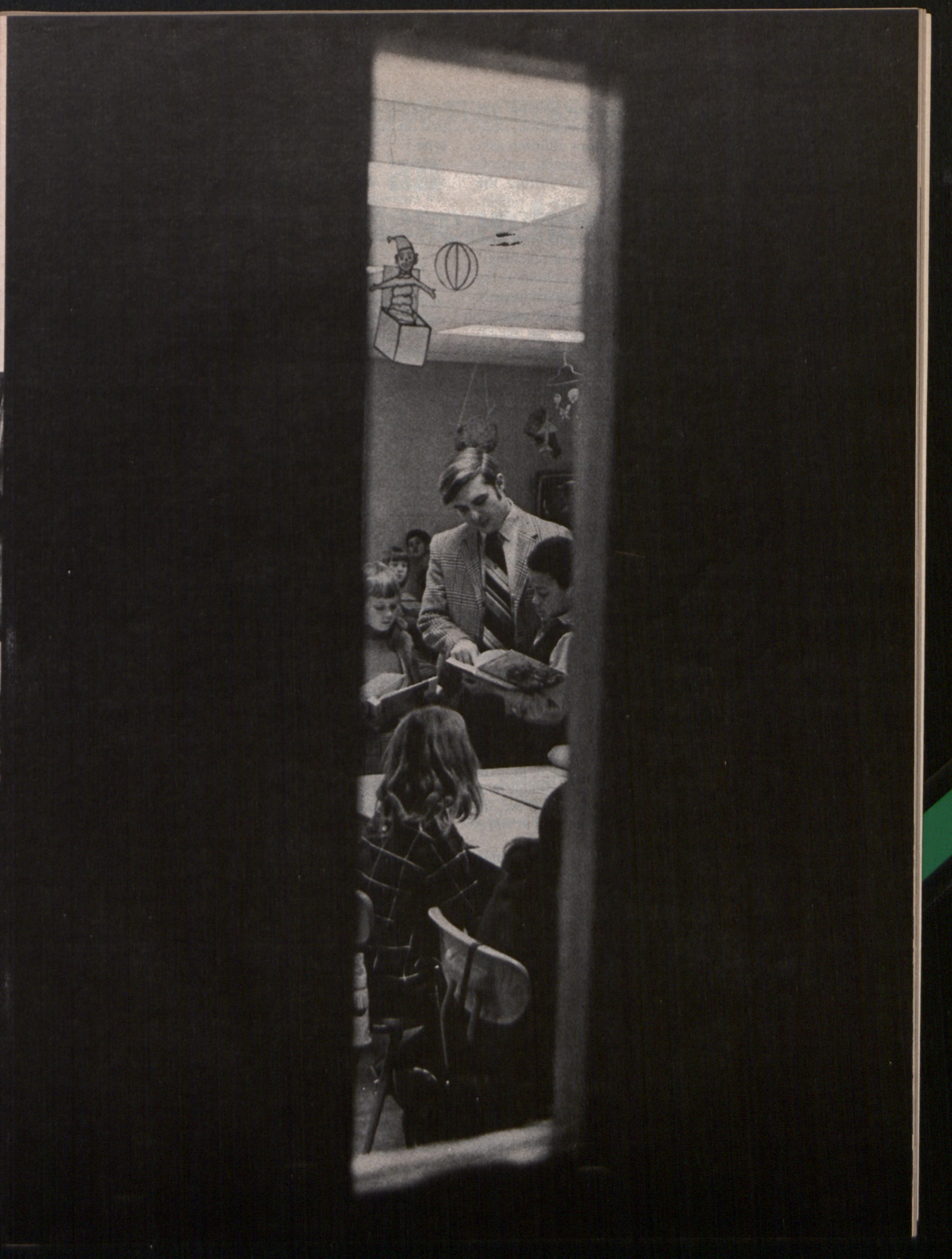
- The quality of teachers' understandings influences to a large degree what teachers do in the classroom.
- The best source for teachers to learn more about teaching and learning, growth and development of children, and materials and methods is through an examination of their own practices and their own classrooms.

John Dewey, who had a good sense of what it meant to be a professional teacher, summed up the foregoing assumptions by suggesting the need for teachers to become "students of teaching." His principal concern was that teachers needed to maintain a reflective capacity in order to grow, in order to become individuals who were clear about their intentions and capable of making independent judgments about learning in their classrooms.

Over the past four years I have come to understand that teachers have not had opportunities, or been encouraged, to examine their purposes and practices. My colleagues and I have learned this through the *Teacher Interview* activity at the Center for Teaching and Learning at the University of North Dakota. The *Teacher Interview* provides a context for individual teachers to reflect on their intentions, use of materials, relationships with children, organization of time and space, difficulties, successes, and so on. Initially designed as a program evaluation instrument, it has become more of a staff development tool. Teachers tell us that the interview, which is from two to four hours in length, is one of the most intense in-service activities they have ever engaged in.

The *Teacher Interview*, while still valuable for program evaluation, has become a basic source for staff development in many North Dakota schools. It is often used in association with two other interviews—the *Child Interview* and the *Parent Interview*. Each of these contributes further to teachers' understandings about teaching and learning. (For information about all three interviews, write to Vito Perrone, Center for Teaching and Learning, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, ND 58202.)

After engaging in the interview activity, some teach-



ers keep daily journals in which they note positive and negative responses of children, peer interaction, children's use of various materials, questions children ask, and so on. Other teachers document specific aspects of their instructional programs—reading, writing, the creative arts. These activities assist teachers in reflecting on teaching and learning in their classrooms. And, in some places, teachers share their insights with each other and discuss education as "students of teaching." The idea of "teachers as researchers" takes hold as the documentation activity provides teachers a framework within which to review aspects of their classrooms.

In the summer of 1975, several teachers who had been involved in the *Teacher Interview* and documentation activities came together to organize a *Staff Development Handbook* that might assist other teachers in organizing growth activities. Approximately 100 North Dakota teachers reviewed the initial draft of the *Handbook*. In addition, the *Handbook* went through at least eight revisions. I believe that it now presents an exemplar of what teachers can do when given the opportunity to act as professionals.

One section of the *Handbook* asks questions under specific headings (components) in order to help teachers begin to analyze what takes place in their classrooms. A portion of it follows:

Awareness/Reflection

Beginning to wonder, to question, to search, to step back and view ourselves as we actually are.

- What are my strengths as a teacher?
- What do I know about how children learn?
- How do my beliefs and attitudes about teaching guide the decisions I make about my classroom practice?

Trust

Feeling safe enough to experiment, to discuss, to admit problems, to fail, to ask questions, to seek help, to maintain faith in ourselves and in others. Trust develops in an atmosphere where you are known for what you are, understood for where you've been, accepted for what you've become and *still* are gently invited to grow.

Where can I find support as I reflect upon the uncertainties and questions I have about my teaching?

Are there others with whom I can share ideas, questions, and concerns?

Opportunities for Growth

Being able to recognize the value of new experiences; to create opportunities for growth where they do not seem to exist.

- Who are the people who can assist me to grow personally and professionally?
- How can I arrange my day so that I will have time to seek out opportunities for growth?

For each of the components—awareness/reflection, trust, and so on—the *Handbook* has a series of theoretical-philosophical statements and corresponding practical suggestions. A part of one appears below. It is taken from the section relating to Awareness/Reflection. (The theoretical-philosophical statement appears first in italics; the practical ideas, second in regular type.)

"By a school organized as a center of inquiry, then I imply an institution characterized by a pervasive search for meaning and rationality in its work. Fundamentally, such a school requires that teachers be free to inquire into the nature of what and how they are teaching."

—Robert Schaefer.

Write down five learning experiences of your own. [For example you might list learning to cook or learning to make pottery. Then, answer the following questions about each experience.]

- Why was it important?
- In what setting did it occur?
- Were others involved in the experience?
- Was there anything special about what you learned?
- Was there anything unique about you at that time?
- Draw generalizations about the conditions under which you learn best.
- Share your learning with someone else.

Does this help you to look differently at the way children in your classroom learn?

Those responsible for the development of the *Handbook* do not suggest that it should serve as the sole basis for a staff development effort for which individuals and groups of teachers might take responsibility. Growth, after all, is a highly personal process that occurs as individuals find ways to reflect, as well as to act, on their experiences. But the *Handbook* does represent a starting point for growth; in addition—and this I believe is significant—it encourages teachers to rely more on their own personal resources and on those of their colleagues than on any other available resources.

The Instructional and Professional Development Committee of the North Dakota Education Association (NDEA) has incorporated the *Handbook* into its staff development activities. Those of us at the University of North Dakota who have been involved in the development of the *Handbook*, along with some 80 classroom teachers, will help NDEA organize eight regional workshops built around the assumptions explicit in this article.

In addition to working with the *Handbook* at the workshops, participating teachers will be asked to document activities in their classes during the week prior to the workshops. For those teachers who wish to pursue some of the staff development activities further, we will provide additional assistance.

Our goal is that groups of teachers in local committees will carry on the development activities without relying heavily on external groups, including those of us at the University. If our efforts are successful, we can be assured that when teachers call on external resources, they will request *specific* assistance on terms that they define. □

The Teacher as an Introspective Researcher

Not long ago I discovered I could evaluate the teaching and learning in my classroom by using a form of documentation that would assess the learning taking place. One of my former college instructors suggested I begin by just observing the activity in my classroom for short periods of time each day. I made anecdotal records of my observations in a notebook.

I used my notes to make some specific observations about children's activity and their learning. The results were not astounding, but the entries helped to confirm many of the notions I had and also raised some questions.

After making many broad observations about my classroom, I decided to investigate just one facet. I chose math because that subject was least appealing to the children. I began observing and recording both my activities and the children's in that subject.

My observations indicated an inconsistency between my philosophy and my practice. In spite of my strong belief that manipulative math experiences help children to understand math concepts, I was doing little in the way of teaching with these materials or encouraging their use in independent activity. In fact, my comments to the children often implied that paper-and-pencil exercises had greater value than working with the manipulative materials in the math center. I was disturbed by my findings and knew I needed to do some serious thinking about my philosophy and its implementation.

I consulted some favorite books as well as several teacher friends to help me do my rethinking.

I discovered that much of my difficulty with manipulative experiences seemed to be a result of inadequate organizational planning. Four observations were apparent.

1. The manipulative materials were stockpiled on a small shelf where there was little room for children to work.
2. There were many materials available, but students were not using them on an individual basis.
3. Because I did not use the materials often in my teaching, I was not demonstrating the value of hands-on mathematical exercises to the students.
4. Most of the children who used the cash register made excellent progress in their understanding of place value.

Then I made some appropriate changes in the math program.

Since my first attempt as a teacher-researcher, I have continued to experiment with alternative manipulative experiences in math, using a variety of settings and age levels. Through careful observation and recording, I have come to more specific conclusions about the purpose and use of manipulative experiences.

Using the same technique during the past five years, I have also been involved in research on several other topics such as lab approaches to social science and science, vocabulary development, language experience, parent-child-teacher conferences, preschool conferences, values clarification, multi-age grouping, parent meetings, and independent scheduling. Even though my purpose in this was self-improvement and growth in understanding the teaching and learning in my own classroom, I have shared the results of my research in articles, workshops, panel discussions, and coffee klatches.

Personal evaluations have offered challenges and posed questions for me that I know can be answered with immediate and purposeful feedback. Through my own research in the classroom, I am assured of continued opportunities for personal growth and professional development.

—**Richard Hovda,** *doctoral candidate, The Ohio State University, Columbus; former supervising teacher, Minot (North Dakota) Laboratory School.*

This is a personal statement about my growth as a teacher. In the past six to eight years, I have come to understand much more about children and classrooms —and myself as a teacher—than I had in all my previous years in the profession.

I had wanted to be a teacher ever since I was in the third grade. As a child, I remember how good I felt when I got to copy "the assignments" on the chalkboard. I remember trying to please my teachers by doing the things they wanted me to do. I remember participating with my classmates in races in mathematical computations; the first one to finish would be called Number One. I was Number One often. As I look back now, I can't remember wondering how it felt to be Number Seven or Number 32. And yet today, as a teacher, I find myself especially concerned with

children who are not Number One in their academic work or in any other area of their development—emotional, social, or physical.

When I was training to be a teacher, I never heard of concepts like "total child," "diagnosis," or "self-concept." I only heard about teaching reading, arithmetic, spelling, geography, history. I was told my job was to "teach" subjects. So teach them I did.

In my early years in the classroom, I was especially happy with myself. Everything that happened in the room happened as a direct response to something I said or did. Those pupils who could respond as I wanted found favor with me. Those who could not were in trouble. I knew it, and they knew it. It was as simple as that.

When I try to understand why I taught this way, I recall the belief of many educators that we teach as we were taught. This certainly was true for me. The teaching model of the times was like that, and I feel it continues to be the dominant practice even today.

For many years I accepted the idea that the people who wrote the textbooks and workbooks knew better than I which curriculum materials would be useful for my class. I followed the author's plan almost word for word, page by page. I believed my job was to teach content to the children—in the order the author of the text programmed. During this period, I used tests as the criteria for judging students and their work. I believed that if a child got 100 on a test, I was a "good" teacher. The student and I both rejoiced. Not even once did I suspect that a student who knew the "material" well enough to get 100 might be wasting time taking the test.

I also remember looking for ways to make school enjoyable for children. For example, the class and I prepared blueberry pancakes or made stuffed animals. These projects, however, were relegated to a short period once a week and were not in any way related to the "real job" of schools: covering subject matter.

During the next few years, I became involved in a frantic search for gimmicks—the proverbial bag of tricks—to use in my teaching: a process of candy-coating education. I was searching for ways to lull children into accepting what I had to teach them. I was searching for ways to make school "fun."

I also promised rewards. If everyone finished some prestated activity, we would have a treat or an extended recess period. The reward told the children that the business of learning was not the exciting part of school but that the treat or recess was.

I rewarded those who finished first. They got to clean the chalkboard erasers, hold the door, be first in line. This practice only strengthened the old adage "them-that-has-gits." In retrospect, it seems as if I rewarded the smartest with special privileges, taught to the middle group, and "punished" those who didn't finish their work or do what I wanted them to do.

Many times as I presented the work, I said, "When you grow up, you'll appreciate the fact that I'm making you do this. It's for your own good." No teaching for immediacy, always for some far-off goal like "when you grow up." I knew what was best for the children I taught.

Then something happened to one of our high school students—a great person and a fine athlete who had difficulty regurgitating information on a history test. Our team was scheduled to participate in the state meet two days after report cards were issued. The rule said that a student must have an average of 75 percent in order to play. He had a 74.4 percent. He could not play. As I remember the incident, I can still feel his hurt and bewilderment—his struggle to understand.

As a result of this, I began to feel concern for children who were always in trouble, for children who never got 100 in anything, for children who looked and acted bored much of the time. I began searching for ways to become a more effective teacher, ways to ease the hurts and disappointments of children, ways to help children find joy in learning.

About this time, I was fortunate enough to become acquainted with three or four people in North Dakota who helped me find joy in my own learning, who helped me develop my own teaching style. They didn't provide any answers for me, but they knew how to question me so that I could look at my teaching practices and reflect on them. They also provided a supportive atmosphere in which I felt free to try different classroom approaches.

In addition to supporting me and providing me with a mirror for personal reflection, they trusted me. We developed intense personal and professional relationships in which we shared who we were and what we believed about life. This added a much needed dimension, because I know my growth as a person preceded and paralleled my growth as a teacher.

I started to read everything I could find that might help me. I took every course I thought would show me the way. I talked with anyone I could find who valued the educational philosophy I was beginning to understand. The heart of that philosophy was the realization that I knew the children in my classroom better than anyone else—textbook writers, administrators, curriculum developers, specialists, diagnosticians. Although I valued their suggestions and their expertise in specific areas, I learned that the responsibility for making decisions that affect the educational experiences of each child in my class is mine. The focus of my approach to children shifted from teach-

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ing to learning, because I learned that I could not *teach* anyone anything.

I am slowly formulating a personal style of teaching based on this belief. I'm learning to plan programs based on individual need, to evaluate individual growth, to record my findings, to reflect on my practices and review my actions—to be a researcher in my own classroom. I'm also learning to be supportive of others who wish to question their professional practices.

My growth as a teacher meant giving up my dependence on published materials and the idea that I could make questionable educational practices fun. As I continue to grow, I am aware of my need to question my beliefs and actions further and to trust myself and my observations about how my students learn and grow.

I continue to reflect, to search, to record, to review. The work is frustrating and demanding but never before have I felt so enriched in my professional life.

—**Dorothy Finken,** *second grade teacher, McKinley Elementary School, Minot, North Dakota.*

We have chosen to teach others. Therefore we must teach ourselves what it means to teach others. That is an intensely personal kind of growth, because each of us brings to that effort a unique set of skills and perceptive abilities, peculiar unto ourselves alone, and we have, by choosing to become teachers, obligated ourselves to develop those skills and abilities to their fullest. To do less is a breach of faith, not only with ourselves and our profession, but most important of all, with the children whose lives are in our hands.

North Dakota is a vast prairie—more than 70,000 square miles of flat fertile farmland, rolling grasslands, and rough river-canyon country called the Badlands. There are only slightly more than 600,000 residents in the state, of whom 135,000 are students enrolled in the public schools.

The state has more than 300 public school districts. Of them, only four have a total enrollment of 8,000 or more students, and only six have enrollments ranging from 2,000 to 8,000. The rest enroll fewer than 2,000 students.

To say that these characteristics present a problem in the provision of in-service opportunities to the teachers of North Dakota is an understatement.

The North Dakota Education Association (NDEA) has 206 local affiliates, ranging in size from four to 554 members. Most local associations have fewer than 40 members, a characteristic that in itself makes an in-service program geared to local associations a near-impossible dream.

The very fact that so many school districts are small and that the larger ones are scattered means that little in-service education goes on at the school district level. Only the large (by North Dakota standards) districts may have the theoretical capability to provide professional development opportunities for their staffs, and many of these lack either the funds or the expertise or both to do so. There has been, in short, a void in in-service educational opportunities for teachers in the state of North Dakota. The NDEA has moved to fill that void.

A most exciting prospect for new professional development experiences for North Dakota teachers has resulted from a cooperative agreement between NDEA and Vito Perrone of the Center for Teaching and Learning at the University of North Dakota. Dr. Perrone, long recognized nationally as a developer and implementer of imaginative programs in teacher education, has begun to establish a staff development program predicated on the assumptions that teachers are their own best resource and that that resource is often underutilized, particularly if the teacher operates in a sphere of relative isolation from colleagues.

To introduce the concept of professional growth through introspection, the NDEA's Instruction and Professional Development Commission has scheduled a series of eight regional seminars throughout the 1976-77 school year. These seminars are open to all teachers in the state. Dr. Perrone and his associates have identified a cadre of qualified people to serve as trainers/facilitators for each of the seminars. The NDEA will arrange for and provide sites, facilities, equipment, and publicity and will, along with the University of North Dakota, support the venture financially.

In 1977, a summer session, one week in length for college credit, will be open to all who have participated in the seminars throughout the year. The summer session will focus on the year's growth experiences and will form the basis of a continuing personal professional growth program available to the teachers of North Dakota through the NDEA and its many resources.

NDEA believes that this kind of commitment to the improvement of instruction must be made simply because an organization of teachers must be built on two parallel and equal philosophical pillars: one, the enthusiastic, vigorous promotion of teacher welfare and defense of teacher rights and the other, equally important, the improvement of educational opportunity for teachers.

If we must teach our children that they are indeed unique, should we do less for those who teach them?

—**Donald L. Rollie,** *executive secretary, Idaho Education Association; former assistant executive director for field services, North Dakota Education Association.*

A War on Fuzziness

BY WILLIAM SAFIRE
Columnist, New York Times.

There is a very blurred subject that I want to bring into sharp focus. It's a danger that should be troubling everyone in the media, in education, and in politics.

The danger is rampant, suffocating fuzziness. Fuzziness in the way we express ourselves, fuzziness in the way we educate our children, fuzziness in the way we make our political choices.

I suggest that this fuzziness is interrelated and is spreading. I want to show how it exists in my field, the world of words; how it has insidiously worked its way into the schools; and how it is now billowing out across the landscape of political ideas. Then, because I am an optimist and because I believe in precision, I will suggest how, together, we can launch a counterattack.

The other day I was looking at my 11-year-old son's report card. The first thing I looked for, of course, was "English." That's what pulled me through at the Bronx High School of Science 30 years ago. But my son's card had no such category as English. Instead, my son patronizingly explained, he studied "Language Arts" or "Language Skills."

Why the snazzy new name? I could understand if the category dealt with several languages or a course in linguistics, but it turned out my son was taking one part of one language: English grammar.

I suggest that the first word they should study in Language Arts is "euphemism." Perhaps there is some excuse for a garbageman's wanting to call himself a "waste disposal engineer," but why should a teacher of English want to pose as a language artist? That's the work of a con artist (or, as they say in school, a student of the confidence arts).

Too many of us, in our common parlance, take part in this drift toward fuzziness. We no longer speak of a "way of life" or a "mode of dress," but we lump them together into a vogue word like "life-style." We do not ask where we *are*, but where we are *at*. The edges of our moments blur into "time frames." Maybe this is because we have learned the ambiguous language of testimony, from the land of to-the-best-of-my-recollection. Nobody ever *says* anything; instead "he indicates to me." *To indicate* is to point to, but in its new meaning, an indication is a gesture that can be quickly denied if contradicted.

Our vogue words are vague words. We are afflicted with the response of *feeling* rather than the response of *understanding*. Let me illustrate: About 10 years ago, the standard response to everything was "Fantastic." As that murmured answer became popular, it was replaced by "Beautiful." Today, the standard response is "Terrific." The word is not a word; it is an approved sound to express not a thought but one's presence in the room. A simple grunt would be a better use of language.

At home and in school, the creeping fuzziness creeps on. What about in the political arena? Surely there we demand specific ideas from

articulate men and women. Alas, the fuzz is on the political cheek as well.

In New Hampshire last February, President Ford wanted to make the point that he was in the primary campaign to stay. He told his audience: "I'll be in this game right up until the whistle is blown." Now, he's a former football player. He ought to know that you blow the whistle at the start of the game. Actually what he said was that he was in the game right up until it started.

Some of the Democratic hopefuls also tended toward fuzziness. One candidate looked dreamily out over his audience and informed them: "The future lies ahead." There's a promise a politician really can keep.

I don't want to sound too much like an old Agnew speech, which I probably wrote, but it seems to me that our school system has actively encouraged a lot of this fuzziness. In the misguided bloom of egalitarianism, in the desire to foster self-expression, too many educators did away with the necessary discipline of direction.

Were too many students suffering from those repressive bad grades? Don't flunk them out—end the grading system, or inflate it to death. Were people being denied higher education because they were subjected to inferior lower education? Then open up the system—never penalize the unqualified student.

As educators well know, something is not working. Verbal scores on scholastic aptitude tests, which had been declining steadily, recently have been plummeting. Why? One answer: At home and at school, students have not been firmly directed to talk straight and write straight and think straight.

I'm not suggesting that we rap knuckles. I am suggesting that we set standards and make demands and begin at the root of communication: English. *Feeling* is easy; thinking is tough.

There is hope, of course. The bestsellerdom of Ed Newman's *Strictly Speaking* shows that ridicule can be used to tighten up the mother tongue—and that there are more people than we might think who are fed up with our debasement of it.

How can we combat fuzziness? First, I think our schools should put a new emphasis on English—not "Language Arts" or "Communications Skills," but on straight talk and plain, clear writing.

We can awaken interest in language by exploring with students the slang that's in action today. Nothing is wrong with informal speech as long as you know when to use it and know to what specific, precise use it's being put.

The slang term *funky* had its origin in jazz lingo some 40 years ago, when funky was said to be the odor of a stale cigar. Louis Armstrong used to play in a place called "Funky Butt Hall." Later, that adjective for the smell of cigars in jazz dives came to mean jazzy, and then avant garde, and now, modish, as applied to dress. Students should know what the slang they use means and from whence it is derived—this wakes up their curiosity about words.

Second, in our homes we ought to reinforce a new emphasis on the importance of language and wage war on fuzziness.

Parents must be enlisted in the crusade for precise articulation. Their job is not just to tell their kids to sit up straight and do their homework but to work with teachers in discovering how to communicate verbally and how to revive the lost art of writing a letter. (I think long-distance telephoning has become the worst enemy of the written word in America.)

Third, career education fits into this accent on precision. I know some educators insist that career education is a terrible trend toward vocational training at an early age and say that we must let our children be children. The answer to that is to let our children be people. Economics is a fact of real life, and young people do well to learn fairly early about the dignity of work and the discipline that careers demand. We should not be so embarrassed about stressing the value of getting ahead in life by combining talent, training, and hard work. Twenty-one is certainly not the age for retirement.

Next, we ought to try to channel some of the taxpayer anger and parent litigation toward more constructive ends. Taxpayers who demand some bottom-line proof that their dollars are being comparatively well spent, parents who are ready to go to court to complain about a defective product, even students who discover and demand their "rights" are not necessarily the educator's enemy.

As doctors and lawyers can tell you, America is becoming the land of litigation, and one thing that the law requires is specificity. Just as the courts compel educators to let the students have their say, so educators can demand that students demand rights in clear, well-organized prose. It might provide them with a whole new incentive to learn.

Finally, if educators and members of the press launch a war on fuzziness, insisting that students and commentators speak lucidly even if wrongheadedly, then, as the night follows the day, it must follow that our leaders will, in Adlai Stevenson's words, "talk sense to the American people." And then we will see a new birth of respect for *all* our institutions. □

Mr. Safire spoke on this topic at greater length at the 1976 Convention of the American Association of School Administrators.

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Dealing with the Angry Ones

By BETTY BOSTROM
Special Education Teacher and Prevocational Adviser, Edmonds Cooperative Prevocational Program, and
SPENCER THUNDER
Senior High Program Manager, Special Services, Edmonds Cooperative Prevocational Program, Edmonds, Washington.

"SAGE is a class for kids who can't get along in regular schools. Some of us are slow and just can't keep up or just can't learn very well. A lot are here because we can't cope with our feelings in other schools and we get kicked out because teachers don't understand us and are frightened of us. The teachers wouldn't of wanted to mess with some of us."

In 1973, the Edmonds School District initiated SAGE (Self-Achievement and Growth through Education) as part of the Cooperative Prevocational Program. The SAGE staff uses behavior-management techniques in working with behaviorally disturbed adolescents at the junior and senior high school levels.

The SAGE class, which is self-contained, is housed at Maplewood Center for the Handicapped, where there are classes, from preschool through high school, for students with all categories of handicapping conditions.

The first SAGE class had 10 students, drawn from the district's five high schools and the one continuation high school. Referrals came from teachers, counselors, probation and parole officers, and parents.

The students lacked self-esteem and apparently disregarded authority figures in general and school personnel in particular. They had many problems: Some were victims of social deprivation, physical abuse, and sexual assaults by members of their families. Some were drug addicts. Others had been caught stealing or setting fires.

To deal with these problems, SAGE staff turned to community resources. For example, the staff went to Child Protective Services with the case of a student who arrived at school with black eyes and a swollen jaw, the result of a severe beating by her father. The staff turned to mental health clinics for free or low-cost counseling services and to local businesses to provide a few hours of on-the-job training for some of the SAGE students.

SAGE is not intended to be a three-year junior or senior high school program. Instead, it is an intervention program in which students are enrolled for periods of time ranging from a month to a year and a half, depending on the severity of their behavioral disabilities.

The prime objective of SAGE is to help students develop appropriate coping skills so that they can return to their regular classes as quickly as possible. The staff's expectation that after a short time students will "make it" in the regular school environment tends to increase the young people's self-esteem and to direct their efforts toward positive behavior change.

Students' ages range from 15 to 19; their intelligence quotients, as measured by the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, range from 78 to 140. The ratio of boys to girls enrolled in the program is usually 4 to 1.

One characteristic of SAGE students is low academic standing, which may result from poor school attendance, illness, a slow rate of learning, or a combination of these. Another factor common to the students is an impaired father-child relationship. While their mothers are described as weak, ineffectual, dominant, or alcoholic, they do not seem to have so great a negative impact on their children's emotional adjustment as do fathers described as having these same characteristics.

Teachers and assistants in the program present stable adult models, are steeped in counseling and learning theory, and are trained in behavior-management skills. Their personal characteristics are as important as their professional qualifications.

Children with emotional disabilities are masters at pinpointing vulnerable areas in adults ("Boy, are you old!" "Hey, you're skinny!"), and they can zero in so accurately and quickly that a teacher's ego must operate at full strength to withstand the verbal onslaughts. Therefore, those who work with these youngsters need to be comfortable with themselves, to be honest with themselves and others, to care about people as individuals worthy of respect, and to have a sense of humor.

Although SAGE's administrators provide support services and make administrative decisions, they allow staff the freedom to function crea-

tively and autonomously within the program.

Since the adjustment class grew out of the needs of the senior high prevocational program and is administered as a part of the secondary special education program, the regular school staff does not mind referring students to SAGE. Teachers view the SAGE class as an appropriate alternative for their students. The students themselves generally accept their reassignment, because they are moving from one prevocational class to another. Parents, too, are far less defensive and upset than they otherwise would be when they understand that Johnny is still a prevocational student even though he is not attending his regular high school.

Referral procedures require that teachers clearly identify, in measurable terms, the maladaptive behavior(s) for which the students are referred.

A student is not admitted to the SAGE class until the SAGE teacher has met with parents and child, preferably in the home. At this time, agreements on goals are made and signed. Parents and student are encouraged to visit the program before the student enrolls.

In the SAGE class, students and staff establish goals and define acceptable behaviors. When students clearly understand the behaviors to be changed and the rationale for the change and how to effect it, they assume primary responsibility for modifying their behaviors.

Interestingly, some students do not continue their negative behaviors when they begin the SAGE program. Apparently, the reason for this is the move from an open-school setting to a structured self-contained environment, which requires clearly defined acceptable behavior, decision making by students, knowledge of the consequences of behavior, consistently applied rules, and self-responsibility for behavior.

SAGE focuses on increasing the self-worth of students and on helping them learn to deal with their rage. It develops their ability to weigh alternatives and consequences so as to make appropriate choices—for appropriate choices will give them the survival skills to function in the real world of high school and community.

Points are used to reinforce appropriate choices and to provide incentive or reward for the student. For instance, Johnny was referred to the program for "not completing assignments." In SAGE, he must earn a certain number of points for completing assignments in order to go bowling, use the shop area, have free time for other activities, etc. When he has a total of 500 points, he is entitled to a day off from school (with parental permission and prior arrangement with staff).

It is Johnny's responsibility, not the staff's, to choose what he will do: work—or not work. The consequence of *working* is reward. The consequence of *not working* is sitting in his seat for the school day without adult attention and, usually, without attention from peers, who are too busy earning their points to attend to Johnny.

SAGE deals with three types of students: severely emotionally disabled (psychotic aggressive, schizophrenic); those with social and emotional disorders (impulsive aggressive, depressive); and those whose behavior is a result of frustrations arising from home or school.

Students in the first group are severely damaged kids for whom a short-term intervention program is inadequate. Their prognosis is poor. For these students, SAGE provides a sheltered, low-key learning environment.

The second group includes hostile kids, those who manipulate or those who "fly off the handle." Specific behavioral interventions are usually successful in changing their maladaptive behavior, and they may be able to return to the regular school program after 10 to 20 weeks in SAGE.

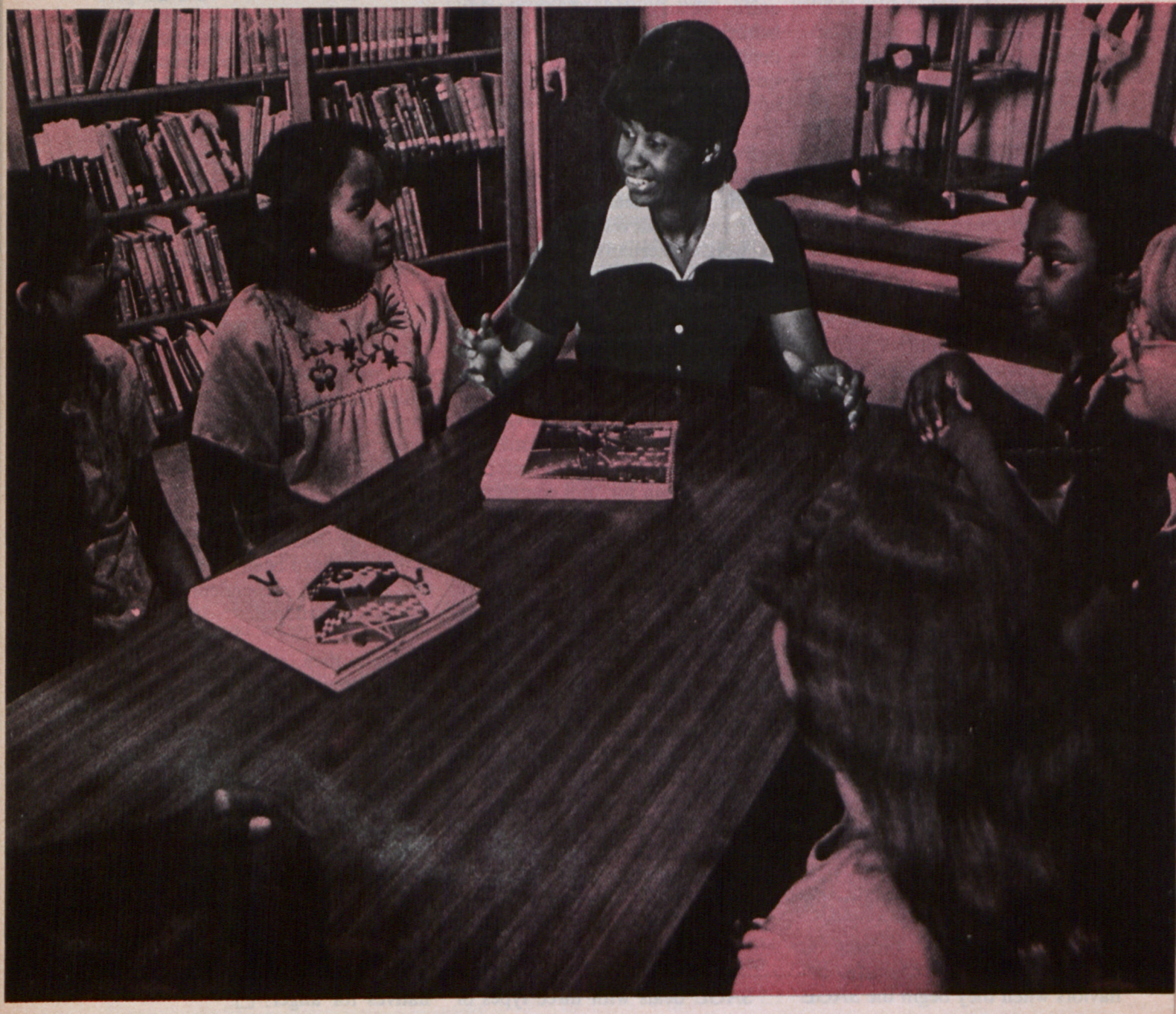
In our opinion, youngsters in the third group are "victims of disturbed behavior" rather than disturbed themselves. Their behavioral disability is transitory, stemming from problems originating in their milieu and developed as a way of coping with that environment. This group includes the chronic truant, the behaviorally aggressive male, the depressed or withdrawn female. These students are usually victims of family instability and abuse, and many have been involved with the courts as dependent and/or delinquent children.

These, then, are the angry ones, the children of rage to be found in public school classrooms across the United States. Labels are unimportant in working with such students —except for those who must deal with categories and budgets and counting noses.

What *is* important and very necessary to angry children are administrators who will find a place for them with the intent of truly meeting their needs and teachers who are prepared to offer appropriate alternatives for anger. □

The Teacher of the Year Reminisces

Shown below with some of her students, the author is a friend, helper, leader, good listener, and facilitator of learning.



By **RUBY MURCHISON**
1976 Teacher of the Year and Language Arts and Social Studies Teacher, Washington Drive Junior High School, Fayetteville, North Carolina.

Since I was named Teacher of the Year last spring, I have received communications from people all over our nation and from Americans overseas. Many of their warm and friendly inquiries about my classroom experiences have caused me to reflect on my career as a teacher for the past 23 years.

One of my most exhilarating experiences was greeting my first class, a self-contained fourth and fifth grade combination at Bayside Elementary School, a four-teacher school in Bath, North Carolina. Seated before me were 34 eager, bright, and starry-eyed youngsters. My job was to facilitate their growth in basic communication and computational skills, improve their health habits, spur their curiosity, and help them to develop a capacity for moral judgment and a sense of responsibility appropriate for their maturation level. In addition, I was to help them develop into responsible, participating members of our society.

I felt then that school should be stimulating and that learning should be relevant and exciting. I wanted to create a learning environment in which children could perceive themselves as belonging and having a stake in the action.

I used the basal texts as a framework for my planning and incorporated nifty ideas from my personal materials, the library, and my students into class activities.

I was ready for action except for one grave obstacle: I had to decide how best to work with two grade levels in the same classroom. My first impulse was to panic, to allow fear to stifle my enthusiasm for teaching. But when I realized that I had to face this challenge in order to succeed as a teacher, I sought creative ways to adapt the knowledge I had gained in undergraduate methods classes to my classroom situation.

When I overcame this obstacle, I was ready to introduce my nifty ideas. I was bubbling with excitement and anxious to engage my students in a variety of experiences.

I proceeded to teach them at what I considered a reasonable pace, but when I gave reviews and evaluations to determine their level of achievement, I was disappointed to learn that their performances were not as good as I had anticipated. This discovery worried me until I learned, early in that first year, the necessity of clearly defining what I expected students to learn and at what level. I also learned that I had to help them individually and that I had to proceed at a pace commensurate with their abilities, needs, interests, and learning styles. Perhaps it was at that time that I became convinced that what goes on in the classroom must focus first on students, then on the subjects to be taught.

Another memorable experience was the year I taught first grade. For the first time in my career, I was teaching beginners to read, write, and compute. I was also performing all the other sacred tasks so carefully and nobly performed by first grade teachers.

First graders are unique observers. They can see, do, and say some of the most intriguing things. I learned to love their responses, because they responded in their own way to those things that were meaningful in their own worlds.

My ability to observe, my capacity to be patient, and my insight into individual children's learning styles soared during that year of teaching first grade, because learning to read, write, and count was a slow and difficult process for many of my students.

In all my years of teaching, I have always wanted students to feel good about themselves. I believe that it is important for them to experience success and to discover their special talents. Therefore, getting to know all my students early in the school year is a priority with me.

One of my most successful experiences in this regard was helping Jan, an academically bright and adventurous youngster, to develop his special talent. He was a student in my seventh grade English and social studies class.

During the first week of school, I learned that he was an articulate speaker and a capable writer. In response to an announcement I read to my students about an oratorical contest, Jan prepared an original speech for the Optimist International Oratorical Contest. I was so pleased and impressed with his work that I suggested no changes.

I coached him several days on perfecting his speech for delivery. Everything went fine until we began to work on gestures, an important element of the presentation because contestants received points for effective use of gestures. Jan complained that gesturing seemed feminine to him, but with some determined coaxing from me, he overcame some of this feeling, learned to gesture somewhat effectively, and subsequently won first place in the oratorical contest at the local level.

The following year, Jan entered the Optimist Contest again. Four other classmates entered, too. This time he improved his gestures and won second place while one of his classmates captured first place.

In his tenth year in school, Jan entered the speaking competition again. Much to my pleasure and satisfaction, he cooperated with me 100 percent in preparation for his presentation. He was named first-place winner in the local competition and advanced to the highest level of the contest, where he won a $500 scholarship.

A year later, I gave him information about the American Legion Oratorical Contest, which involved prepared and extemporaneous speaking. He gave up on this assignment, because he said that it required too much effort and time.

I went to his home the following year and insisted on his participation in the Contest. He was a senior by that time and would be ineligible to participate after graduation. He wrote an award-winning oration on the United States Constitution. After he had advanced to four levels of competition and was one level away from national competition, a one-week Easter vacation from school made it possible for me to work with him every day on his speech. (The extemporaneous speech was the most difficult, because contestants might be asked to discuss any one of six possible topics.)

When Easter vacation ended, he competed in the sectional competition. Participation ended for him at that level, but he gained a $1,000 scholarship; knowledge about the Constitution; trophies; medals; a savings bond; many new friends; and travel experiences in North Carolina, West Virginia, and Florida. Most of all, he had grown personally.

Jan is now a sophomore at East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina. His career ambition is to teach English and later to work as a journalist. We are still friends today.

I learned very early in my career that parents can be a teacher's best friend. In May of 1974, I wanted to take my seventh graders on a field trip to our nation's capital, and I was confident that the class and I could make the trip with the help of parents. So I contacted five of them to meet with me at school concerning the trip. They were excited about the idea and agreed to help me arrange it.

At a second meeting, each of these parents became a committee of one to contact other parents about the trip and to invite them to attend a planned meeting. One parent served as chairperson, and others volunteered to work on subcommittees organized for the project.

The steering committee presented the proposed plans for the trip to the local board of education for approval. The special projects committee organized bake sales and ticket raffles to raise money for various expenses of the trip. A concerned friend donated money anonymously to help defray expenses for those children who needed financial assistance.

The class and I and some parent chaperons toured the Washington, DC, area for two days. Our Congressman, the Honorable Charles Rose, met with us at the Capitol and presented us with a flag of the United States.

Later in early March of this year, Congressman Rose visited with the students at Washington Drive Junior High School. A segment of his visit was televised on a local television station.

I am in touch with many of my former students today through letters, visits, and chance meetings in public. These contacts help me to engage in an ongoing self-evaluation of my role as a classroom teacher.

And now after more than two decades of teaching, I, like Haim Ginott, have come to the conclusion that the teacher is the decisive element in the classroom. As Dr. Ginott noted in the November-December 1973 issue of *Today's Education*, a teacher possesses the power to fill a child's life with misery or joy. A teacher can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. He or she can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal.

In all my contacts with students, I hope I can be a friend, helper, leader, good listener, and facilitator of learning. □

The nationwide Teacher of the Year competition is sponsored each year by the Council of Chief State School Officers, Encyclopaedia Britannica Companies, and the *Ladies' Home Journal*. Selected each spring from nominees of the states and territories, the Teacher of the Year is honored at various ceremonies in Washington, DC.

Lessons Learned

In the early sixties, sex was something you kept out—way out—of the classroom. Often the beginning teacher learned to do this by starring in a humiliating incident. At least I did.

This is how I learned my first great principle: *You're a Teacher Now, So Sex Isn't Funny.*

One day an eighth grader, male variety, rushed up to me, saying, "Hey, Mrs. (I wasn't) Needham, look what I got!" What he had was a mechanical pencil with a liquid-filled bubble at the top. Inside the bubble was a lady in evening dress. When you turned the pencil upside down, the evening dress fell away, leaving the lady nude except for the world's thinnest bra and a G-string.

My natural inclination was to say "Hey, that's great." But I remembered that I was a TEACHER and that teachers (in 1962) could only appreciate technological and physiological excellence within limits. So what I did say was, "You can't have that thing in school. I'll take it." Which I did, with never a nod to due process. I still have it.

Though the next principle I learned was only a minor one, *You Can't Even Trust "Junior" Dictionaries,* the humiliation was major. In that school, it was customary for homeroom teachers to give spelling lessons. On the day in question, the principal was observing in the back of the room and the lesson included the word *whether.* Being as smart as I was, I decided to pull a triple play for him and discuss not simply *whether* but also *weather* and *wether.*

The first words required no research, but when nobody knew the meaning of the third, I asked a boy to look it up in one of the junior (so-called) dictionaries. A few minutes later, I checked back, "Mike, read the definition of *wether.*"

"*Wether,*" said Mike, "means 'a castrated male sheep.' "

Dry ice wouldn't have stuck to my hands. Deep in my brain, something muttered, "It means some kind of Top Brass among Sheep. . . . I'm sure. . . ." Of the 30-odd faces in the room, only one or two twitched, and neither mine nor the principal's was one of them. I felt terribly grateful that there were a few things eighth graders didn't know.

I came away from that experience with a feeling of bitterness toward junior dictionaries as well as a more certain knowledge that not every wether is a bellwether.

In the course of one anxiety-filled evening, I learned a third principle: *You Can't Trust High-Class Cultural TV Programming Even in Prime Time on Commercial Channels.*

One semester, the newspapers were full of quarter-page ads for a forthcoming TV special called "Puritan and Cavalier." A tony program on Cromwell and the Stuarts was a viewing opportunity not to be overlooked—even by eighth grade geography students—so I told everybody to watch it.

On the night of the presentation, I settled down at home with one of my roommates to view the show, which turned out to be not a *history* history program about the seventeenth century, but a *literary* history program about Puritan and Cavalier tendencies in English literature from Chaucer to the present. Although I had never read *The Canterbury Tales,* I knew enough to start squirming when a dramatization of one of them began. That old woman from Bath was certainly airing subjects that we did not discuss in geography. Presently I was writhing in my chair, finding no comfort in the knowledge that eighth graders do not speak Middle English.

The section on Milton brought only short-lived tranquility, because it was followed by the Restoration. Those high-born ladies in that play were openly discussing hanky-panky—and not in Middle English. I prayed for them to get off the screen—please, God, fast—so we can get to the Victorians.

When the program reached the twentieth century, I left the room. From the security of my bedroom, I called down to my roommate, "Tell me it isn't Lady Chatterley."

Laughing (her career was not at stake), she called back, "I can't *believe* it! Not on television!"

In class the next morning, I mumbled casually, "Well, that TV program wasn't quite what I expected. . . ." They all agreed it had been a bomb; most hadn't watched past the first five minutes.

But from a knowing look and a barely audible "Wow!" in the second row, I could tell that one girl had indeed understood Middle English and that she was now capable of recognizing a Cavalier tendency when she saw one. I suggested that maybe when she was older—about 45 or so—she would like to major in English.

—Nancy R. Needham, *editorial associate,* Today's Education.

A Boy Called Frog

By **CHRISTOPHER R. JOHNSON**
English Teacher,
Downers Grove North High School,
Downers Grove, Illinois.

The kid's nickname was Frog. How he came by it is anybody's guess, but I have two theories.

The first theory has to do with his appearance. He had a long and thin face with an elliptical nose. On the nose perched a pair of steel-rim square-shaped glasses. When he looked at me, I felt his eyes growing, bugging out as if they would grasp me by the sleeve and shake me until I paid attention.

The other theory has to do with his walk. He bounced off the balls of his feet, came to a near stop, then took off again. Very erect, very cool, very alert—bounce, bounce, bounce down the hall.

When he first joined my freshman English class, Frog was a fertile island in the leaden sea. In class discussions, he would pierce through the cant and cliché with a well-placed "Why?" or "So what?" He grappled with ideas in class, split apart the generalities so that what had appeared as one discursive road multiplied into speculative paths too numerous to count. If he had a tendency to hand in papers late, who was I to carp? Frog was too interesting in too many other ways.

Every Friday in Frog's class, I allowed an open discussion during which the students were supposed to explore one topic in some depth. One day we were talking about UFO's. As usual, Frog led the others miles out of sight of the purported subject. Another student was explaining about ancient astronauts and time-lapse photography, and Frog interjected, "Well, what if we're not here at all?"

"Huh?" said several students in the class.

"What I mean is, What if we're not really sitting here talking at all? Then it doesn't really matter if people are visiting us from other planets. Because they probably don't exist either."

A few groaned, "Ah, everyone knows we're really here, so it's stupid to even think about." But most were intrigued by the idea, and before long, they were raising such questions as What if the universe is just a small droplet on some huge creature's microscope? What if we're just part of God's dream? What if we're all in transition to some other form of being in the cycle of reincarnation?

Toward the end of the class, Frog summarized the hour's speculations by saying, "Listen, I've thought of all those theories you've mentioned. And I believe we must really be here, because. . . ." In the middle of the sentence, he turned toward his best friend, who was sitting next to him, and grabbed his skin in a quick, hard pinch. The boy let out a yelp that traveled down the hall and echoed back.

Once the laughter died down, Frog continued, "We must really be here, because all the evidence says we are. Larry felt that pain, and he'd laugh if I tickled him. We can all feel hot and cold.

"But the important thing is this. Just because we *can* wonder whether we're really here means that

everything else we usually take for granted shouldn't be taken for granted. You know, like being popular is important, or even that doing well in high school is all that crucial."

I didn't realize then that this last phrase would foreshadow things to come.

Through the rest of the semester, Frog continued to gain the respect of both his classmates and me. It was his writing that most impressed me. His themes skittered constantly on the edge of irony and wrenched creativity out of the blandness of my assignments.

In one of the early themes, students were supposed to describe in detail the way home from school. Disdaining the temptation to give me a simple set of directions, Frog handed in a two-page odyssey through fire-breathing dragons, fair maidens, ogres, and black knights. He even included a map with little drawings of the horrible beasts encountered along the way.

Another assignment required the students to describe a dangerous situation in which they had once found themselves. Frog described his first algebra class. In one frame he captured Mr. X's famed biting of his moustache, his Sunday afternoon strolls up and down the aisles of the classroom, and his indiscriminate waving of the pointer over the heads of his students. Through the maze of equations and fractions rode the class on a path darkened by obscure word problems and elusive formulas. I laughed as I read, then hoped Frog would never turn his satirical eye on me and my classroom behavior.

Eventually, Frog began to realize his own leadership role in the class. When he disobeyed the rules, those rules lost their mysterious air of intimidation. He displayed boredom at my statements and those of his classmates. He strolled into class without a book when he knew he was having an open-book test. The balls of his feet not only bounced off the floor; they flew with portentous significance. The Frog had evolved into Moby Dick. It was not necessary for him to do; he just had to *be*. And so Frog stopped doing.

I no longer had his writings to enliven the sets of papers on my desk. His silence in class told me that he had not read the assignments. Once, twice, then three times he cut class.

I warned Frog that I would have to come down hard on him. "I like you," I told him, "and I think you've got a lot of intelligence. But if you think I can turn my back on missed assignments and irrelevant wisecracks, you're sadly mistaken."

"But the assignments are easy," he protested. "I know I can do them, so why should I bother?"

"So you'll get credit for them," I snapped. By saying this, I was giving credence to the notion that education is a ledger sheet on which one regulates the cash flow of ideas so as to present the most favorable figure on the bottom line—THE GRADE. I was genuinely angry at myself and at him for bringing out my anger. "Don't push too far!" I warned.

Frog stared impassively at me through those bug eyes, nodded, and loped back into the classroom. I watched him, knowing he would push the little comitragedy through to its denouement.

And push he did, like an actor straining against the edges of his characterization. One day I was leading a discussion about some forgotten story. Out of the corner of my left eye, I happened to look at Frog, who was slumping in his seat with his knees pointed toward the ceiling. One hand was cocked behind the other, pulling back on a rubber band that had a paper clip hooked around its end. He was aiming at a girl who sat a knight's move away from him.

Frog saw me look, but before he could stop, he had launched the clip. It missed the girl and landed with a "thwat" against the wastebasket. I cut the laughter short with a barked order for him to "hop out into the hall," where I told him to write me a piece on disrupting class —and to make it good.

It was more than good. It embellished a small classroom incident until it had grown into the symbolic conflict between student and boredom. Each detail—eyes fixed on the instructor as mind wandered far afield, head propped erect to look interested, ears closed to the sleepy music of the teacher's voice—took its proper place in a grand charade. The little clip became a weapon against boredom, its snap against flesh, a reminder that others in the classroom were still alive. In the end, "education" was the ironic victor. The paper was a dreamer's legacy and damnation. How I wish, from that day on, that I had told Frog to simply come to class every

day and write, write, write.

I kept the paper and slipped it into his writing folder. A month later I grabbed a bunch of his papers for the school literary magazine, which was then accepting submissions. By that time, I had forgotten that Frog's "punishment paper" was among those writings.

As the year drew to a close, Frog assumed a lower profile. In my class, he was withdrawn. In others, he actively rebelled. I knew that his grades were falling in all his classes, that he was stealing out of the building for secret smokes, that he hadn't been to P.E. in weeks. He was opting out, not with the instinctive perverseness of those who want attention, but through a conscious decision not to go along—even while fully aware of the consequences.

The consequences did not take long. Frog decided, along with a friend, that he had to have a chocolate milkshake at the restaurant down the street from the school—a clear violation of closed campus rules. They were caught returning and were hit with three-day suspensions. No make-up work allowed. No fraternizing with other kids till after 3:15. Frog had dared, and he had lost.

Before he was allowed back into school, there was the parent conference. All of Frog's teachers gathered around a table like biologists to dissect his motives for the benefit of both his parents and each other.

"Pat is very intelligent, but he just doesn't apply himself," said the algebra teacher.

"He grasps the concepts very quickly, but I haven't received a bit of homework," said the world cultures teacher.

"He does the experiments extremely well," said the science teacher, "but has yet to hand in any reports on insects."

"Same story here," I added.

The dean of students turned on Frog and squinted at him. "Sounds to me like you've been wasting your time this year, eh?"

"He's been like this ever since I can remember," his mother sighed.

"It seems to me that you've been wasting the time of a lot of people this year," his father stated matter-of-factly. Frog looked down into his lap, sitting passively as the guillotine creaked toward his neck. "Well, is what these teachers are saying true or not?" the father asked more harshly. Frog nodded impassively.

"What I don't get," the dean added, "is that all your teachers seem to think you're talented. But you're wasting your talent as if it were dirt for things like stupid trips to the corner restaurant.

"Even beyond that, do you *know* why we worry about the kinds of grades you get? Because there's a lot of competition once you get out of high school. And employers want to see the evidence of hard work and responsibility."

After finishing, the dean looked around at the rest of us, then back at Frog. But the center of attraction's own silence seemed to have drawn a wave of awkwardness over the room. I remember realizing in an instant why the other kids respected Frog. He was totally and absolutely unflappable. We were running him through the copying machine, and he was jamming up the works.

The dean cleared his throat, evidently embarrassed by the silence. Finally, Frog said simply, "So you want me to try harder." We nodded eagerly.

He shrugged and said, "OK." And that was it.

Not that Frog improved all that much. The next day he stayed after class. "Well, I said I was going to play the game, so I guess I'd better find out what assignments I'm missing."

"You don't sound all fired with ambition."

He smiled and answered, "Oh, I am. But not in school."

I flipped through my grade book, reading off the papers he had missed, as he abbreviated them onto a piece of scratch paper. After he had done this, he said, "I guess I'm going to be educated after all."

All this depressed me, for I felt that I had missed making any connection with him. But my spirits lifted when, some days later, I opened the newly published literary magazine and found Frog's piece on boredom and paper clips on page 13. Those kids, I thought disgustedly. Of all the good writing he had done, they picked one short paper written as punishment in class.

Upon rereading, I knew why they had chosen it. The piece spoke to them by capturing those moments in which a student is torn between his or her own world of fantastic daydreams and the external world of compartmentalized knowledge into which we must all be educated. Frog had, in spite of himself, accomplished something worthwhile this year: He had expressed feelings which remain unconscious in most other people. I felt a twinge of triumph in the realization that Frog would, sooner or later, use his talents to make peace with the world.

For the rest of the year, two people taught English to Frog. One nagged him for his assignments, subtracted points from those that were late, marked his punctuation errors with a red pencil, and threatened him with a D for the semester. The other secretly rooted for him to keep writing his irreverent themes, secretly hoped he would continue to put his heading on the wrong side of the paper, secretly admired the whimsical drawings that he left on his desk before my other half handed him a can of cleanser and told him to rub.

June came. Frog got his C, and my memory of him continues to revolve between shadow and light, until I weary of guessing which is the reality. □

Is There a Crisis in Writing Skills?

By **RICHARD LLOYD-JONES**
Chair, Department of English, University of Iowa, Iowa City, and Associate Chair, Conference on College Composition and Communication.

The media have decided that Americans' lack of skill in writing is news, and for over a year now there has been a media blitz on the subject.

The messages the media are sending about writing skills usually report lower scores on such standardized tests as the American College Testing Program (ACT) and the Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT) and a decline in teenagers' writing skills as shown by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). These reports often include cries of alarm by academics and other members of the public who deplore Americans' lack of writing skills.

Yet, despite what the critics say, drops in the scores on ACT and SAT college entrance tests, which are designed to predict achievement in college, are not directly related to writing ability. No one knows for sure how skills measured by these tests affect the entire quality of written discourse. For example, a quick look at most academic journals demonstrates that a large vocabulary does not guarantee good writing and that usage indicates social class more than skill in discourse.

The scores on the writing portions of the National Assessment of Educational Progress are more relevant, because at least NAEP gathers samples of *ad lib* discourse. But NAEP testers have not yet solved the problem of getting discourse that has been revised beyond a first draft on topics of real interest to the writer.

The NAEP test on writing compared scores assigned to essays on identical topics elicited in 1969 and 1974. (See NAEP's *Writing Mechanics, 1969-1974*, Report 05-W-01.) On the basis of holistic scoring of one 20-to-25-minute exercise for each age level, the tests showed that nine-year-olds had not declined in their writing but that 13- and 17-year-olds had gotten worse. The nine-year-olds were asked to undertake an expressive task—to tell a story about a picture of a bounding kangaroo. The older groups were asked to describe something they had seen—the Empire State Building, Niagara Falls, or the Mormon Tabernacle, for example.

The differences between expressive and descriptive exercises may have affected the test scores. Perhaps the older students would have done better on the expressive exercises than they did on the descriptive ones. Then, too, over the five years between the tests, older students may have become less interested in taking a test that could have no practical outcome for them. In that case, a change in attitude toward school may be what was being measured.

Those who interpret the scores must therefore discount even the modest changes. The frequency of errors in spelling and punctuation on the 1969 and 1974 essays showed no change at each age level. Here again, since each writer chose what to include in the paper, those who interpret the scores cannot be sure that each writer encountered similar difficulties in the same proportions. They just don't know, but since the rate of error is remarkably similar over time for each age group, they might infer that most writers find a tolerable level of error and then choose forms which don't force them above that level.

The NAEP studies are the best available, yet even they leave most of the issues shrouded in fog.

Most critics who claim that Americans don't write as well as they used to eventually point an accusing finger at those who teach the subject. Yet the problems surrounding the teaching of writing in our schools existed long before the current media blitz about decline in writing ability.

For one thing, hardly anyone is trained to teach writing, and often those who teach it write very little themselves. Although professional organizations for years have advised composition teachers, who are usually English majors in college, to study linguistics and writing, college English majors take many more courses in literature than in writing.

Moreover, it is not unusual for potential majors in English to go through high school with little work in writing. They usually spell and punctuate correctly and either have good handwriting or type well.

Graduates with English majors may thus go to teach in the schools with very little high school and college work relevant to teaching composition, or they may go to graduate school, get an assistantship, and teach freshman composition out of

the textbook. Those who earn advanced degrees go out to a permanent job in which their status is determined by how quickly they get out of teaching writing.

Surely no other discipline routinely sends teachers to the classroom with so little background relevant to what they must teach. Fortunately some teachers teach themselves, and others ignore the subject of writing altogether and thus avoid damaging their students. But some conscientious souls persist in teaching a lot about writing and language which just isn't so. They insist, for example, that all paragraphs have topic sentences or that long papers are necessarily better than short ones or that adaptation for particular audiences is not important.

Another long-time problem related to teaching writing is class size. Composition teachers with a hundred or more students a day don't assign much discourse. They simply can't review a theme a week for that many students. (If the teachers with large classes have students read each other's work or if they have lay readers to assist in grading compositions, they are able to assign more compositions to their students than they would otherwise.)

Mostly, though, composition teachers simply stress spelling or the eighteenth century names for grammatical forms or punctuation or some other discrete and relatively simple element of discourse, and they drill students on the material that they didn't learn last year. Such resignation to routine not only is easier than teaching writing but also might lead to minor improvement in student scores on standardized tests.

A third reason students are not better writers is that they often have no models to emulate. Most adults do little to demonstrate the importance of writing.

In American society, a young person does not see many adults writing, because most serious writing is not done at home. Many people feel extremely anxious about writing and avoid it if they possibly can. Although people today do not hire scriveners as some of their forefathers did, they do count on lawyers, editors, secretaries, and ghosts to write or rewrite what they want to say. And they view people who admit to writing poetry or diaries or stories with almost the same horror with which they view folks who talk to themselves as they amble down the street.

"Writing [maketh] an exact man," said Francis Bacon, and it is hard to improve on his observation. He was not worried about spelling, but he did take care with word choice and syntax and examples and quotations as they fit into his whole message. The point of the whole discourse depended on the exactness of the parts.

The issue is to produce discourse. Writing ought not be judged one sentence at a time. The goodness lies in the whole blend, not merely in the parts.

That simple stipulation makes me wonder why so many people would rather examine the trees than the forest. Some people simply don't know how to talk about organization, for example. They know they can't follow the argument of some sample of bad writing, but they don't know how to point directly to misleading transitions or to improper divisions.

I don't mean to suggest that mechanical details are unimportant—just that they are superficial. Make a quick test. If an editor or a teacher corrects spelling and punctuation, even sentence structure, people do not ordinarily claim that the work ceases to be that of the original author. They even assume that secretaries and copy editors are hired to make silent changes. But when a ghost writer does the research and the organizing, people challenge the authorship.

In our way of thinking, only a person far up on the scale of responsibility, like the President, can have a ghost writer because people assume that such a leader "accepts" final authorship. For lesser mortals, the shape and content of the discourse as a whole constitute the essential responsibilities of authorship. Only in classroom exercises do Americans consider help with mere mechanics to be cheating. That is the symptom of our real interest in the forest.

Writing can be taught. Teachers of composition can help students get information, select and arrange it, focus on what the arrangement means, and finally put it into words. These steps of discovery are at the heart of all education, and they are the key to good writing. (Many inexperienced writers think that they can separate these processes from the task of making marks on paper, but a good writer knows better than that.)

Teachers can also help students understand that each writer finds different meanings and messages in the same information. For example, although the critics I mentioned earlier and I may agree that the great human need for learning to express thoughts and feelings with precision in writing is not being satisfied in our educational system, we don't arrive at the same conclusion on the basis of the same evidence. We select from our evidence in part on the basis of our audiences; if we assume knowledge where it may not exist, we distort issues for our readers. That problem of writing is basic, yet it is usually a problem that is ignored by teachers in schools.

Is there a crisis? No. A crisis is a great turning point. Perhaps our need for good writing has increased so that our inadequacies are more poignant. Still our DIS-ease about writing is probably chronic rather than acute. □

A Mainstreaming Success Story

By **LINDA EAST**
First Grade Teacher, Altavista (Virginia) Elementary School.

I've always found it helpful as a teacher to jot down a few first impressions of children after their parents brought them by to enroll in my first grade class. My first impression of Bill seemed normal enough: brown skin, short curly black hair, large almond-shaped brown eyes filled with wonder, terribly shy but terribly excited.

His mother was a large dominating woman with eyes like Bill's that seemed to be busy looking past you as she spoke. "I'm afraid you're going to have trouble with Bill," she said. "He's never been away from home, so he may not know how to act. Didn't send him to kindergarten. I was scared the noise of so many children would upset him. Say hello to Miz East, Bill."

A soft "low" came from Bill, who clung tightly to his mother's hand. As they left, she added an afterthought, "Oh, and Miz East, you may have to help Bill when he goes to the bathroom."

The next day was to be a sudden awakening as to just how much I would have to help Bill. Besides not being able to use the bathroom by himself, Bill couldn't eat by himself (he chewed one pea at a time); nor could he speak comprehensibly, walk properly, go up or down steps, run, or jump. When asked a question, he mumbled a stream of unrelated sounds. Bill spent most of the first three days crying in my lap as I tried to organize a new class of diverse and demanding first graders.

I quickly rushed in every specialist I could reach, the principal, and a videotape crew to film Bill in the classroom and on the playground. The tape was sent to some specialists I couldn't reach.

Their verdicts were very discouraging, and I learned nothing new. He obviously needed special education. *But* mainstreaming meant Bill must remain in my room the entire school year, spending only 10 minutes at the end of each day with a learning disabilities teacher. A speech therapist worked with him twice a week for short periods of time, too.

Each day as I worked with the class, I struggled desperately to make every minute of Bill's time a learning experience. Every evening, I cursed the idea of mainstreaming and wondered what kind of thoughtless people could have instituted such an impossible program.

At lunchtime it was necessary for me to feed Bill. After a week of not eating lunch myself, I decided I would try to teach Bill to feed himself each lunchtime until one of the pupils had finished eating and could take over for me. It became apparent that I wasn't going to be Bill's only teacher—the classroom was filled with 24 eager instructors. And they put all they had into teaching Bill to walk, talk, eat, go to the bathroom by himself, run, jump, go up and down steps, and play.

As weeks went by, miracles began to happen, and each day I went home with a glowing account to give my husband. "Bill learned to say 'lunch tray' today." "Bill learned to eat a forkful of mashed potatoes today." "Bill learned to jump from a small chair today."

Bill demonstrated one skill the first week of school which astounded me and which was to be the basis for further learning experiences. He loved the record player and learned to operate it himself after only one lesson. I realized that if Bill could work the record player by himself, he could learn to do other things as well. By the second month of school, not only could Bill turn on my cassette player, he also could set it up, record his own voice, play the tape back, and listen to it. The wonder and smiles on his face delighted me. I recorded simple songs and stories for him to listen to over and over.

At Show-and-Tell time, Bill always mumbled his stories and songs. No one understood anything he said, but the whole class listened attentively to see if he would use one of the words they had taught him. Our big reward finally came at Christmastime, when Bill stood before the class and sang "Jin'le Bells Jin'le Bells Jin'le Bells" over and over again. The class broke into spontaneous applause, and my eyes filled with tears.

By the end of the school year, Bill had learned to speak in short comprehensible sentences. He could read 10 words and recognize three numbers. He ate by himself, sang songs, walked up and down steps, and ran races.

As for mainstreaming, I learned a big lesson that year: Only a classroom full of "normal" children could have set the examples Bill needed to improve his faulty speech and coordination.

Epilogue: In the end, I volunteered to keep Bill in my classroom the following year. He learned to speak coherently, count to 20, recognize letters and sounds, read through three levels of Ginn, retell stories, and make up his own songs. His attention span increased to 40 minutes.

My deep thanks go to his mother, who worked closely with me, and to his speech, special education, and special reading teachers. Most of all, though, my thanks go to all of Bill's fellow classmates, who set such good examples for him. □

SPECIAL FEATURE ON SOME POPULAR PASTIMES

Wilderness Skills

What are teenagers up to these days in their spare time? Many are doing the usual things teenagers have done for years, of course—working at part-time jobs, watching television and listening to radio, reading, socializing with family and friends, taking part in typical sports activities. These are activities many teachers get involved with in their spare time, too.

In the past few years, however, numbers of teenagers—and some teachers, as well—have been spending their free time in pursuits that are not so commonly known and understood: wilderness skills, handcrafts, and mini and trail biking. In the following special feature, writers Jane Meiklejohn-Moz, John Coyne, and James C. Sparks describe these activities and may stimulate teacher-readers to find out what specialized activities their own students may be absorbed in.

The editors invite teachers to tell us about these pastimes and similar ones that their students are involved in. We would also like to know what changes, if any, have come about in school programs as a result of these student interests.

By JANE MEIKLEJOHN-MOZ
Free-Lance Writer, Calais, Vermont.

More and more young people today are discovering the land, especially land removed from the mainstream of American life—wilderness.

When I was a teenager I believed that it was me against the wilderness. I climbed in the Rockies and in the mountains of New England without regard for warnings of any kind. Once, paying no attention to weather conditions, I was caught in a fire tower on the modest Mt. Kearsarge in New Hampshire with a man who was killed by lightning. When I was 20, I learned—by almost losing my life in a rock slide in Switzerland—that the individual who goes against the wilderness rarely conquers it, but the individual willing to carry on a dialogue with the wilderness achieves an equilibrium with it.

But the equilibrium isn't achieved automatically. Training in wilderness skills and guidance from teachers, counselors, or peers are imperative if discouragement and danger are to be averted.

Jean George's young Sam Gribley learned the hard way in *My Side of The Mountain*. "It was discouraging to feed that body of mine. It was never satisfied, and gathering food for it took time and got it hungrier. Trying to get a place to rest it took time and got it more tired, and I really felt I was going in circles."

Fortunately young people today don't have to learn by Sam Gribley's hunt and peck system. Training is everywhere. For example, the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS), Lander, Wyoming, offers wilderness expeditions that give training in rock and snow climbing and canoeing; mountaineering expeditions for proficient mountaineers who want to upgrade their skills; biology expeditions that emphasize biological and ecological studies; winter ski-mountaineering expeditions that include courses in winter camping and ski touring; and kayaking expeditions devoted to basic seamanship, fishing, and wilderness travel skills. NOLS uses the outdoor resources of Wyoming, the Pacific Northwest, Alaska, Utah, Montana, Mexico, and Kenya for all its wilderness expeditions.

The average summer course at NOLS costs about $720 and lasts for five weeks. Special financial arrangements and/or scholarships are available for some courses offered by NOLS, as well as for courses offered by similar organizations, including wilderness camps, devoted to training in wilderness skills.

In northern Vermont, public schools take advantage of the wilderness at their front doors. Tom Keck of Union High School District Thirty-Two in East Montpelier has been teaching wilderness skills for high school credit. His classes literally take to the woods. Without aid of power tools students select and cut trees, notch the resulting logs with axes, cut and shape shingles, and ultimately put together a cabin worthy of the most skilled pioneers.

Former Senator George Aiken shared a special Thanksgiving dinner in the cabin with Keck and his class last November.

On Friday afternoons in winter, youngsters at Stowe, Vermont, High School can choose among such

outdoor activities as forest management, ice skating, and downhill or cross-country skiing as part of their school program. And grade school children in the tiny township of Worcester, population 500, wait for the snow to melt in the spring and then, with a teacher leading the way, climb Mt. Hunger or Mt. Worcester, both over 3,000 feet.

One of the more specialized wilderness skills is rock climbing. Robert Dresbach, general manager of Trailwise, manufacturers of backpacking and mountaineering equipment in Berkeley, California, says it's "the big thing" in California, where there are climbing schools and where, with a minimum of equipment (maybe just rope, pitons, and good boots), "a youngster can get hooked for a relatively modest investment in equipment."

"Rock climbing," says Sam Howe, who heads the Saltash Mountain Camp in the summer and teaches at the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Science during the rest of the year, "is an interesting medium for individual growth in that it is some sort of ultimate challenge." (Saltash is one of six camps in Vermont operated by the Farm and Wilderness Foundation.) I agree, deciding that it isn't the potential for raw danger that gives rock climbing its feeling of being ultimate; rather, it's that the opportunity for exhilaration at the top is so phenomenal. And, of course, it's always a test.

Howe confirmed this by describing "sewing-machine legs," an almost inevitable experience for new rock climbers. "It's a sensation that occurs about halfway up a rock face, when the next handhold just seems too far away or when the climber is not sure if a particular crack will let him reach the top. Legs start to wobble and shake, sweat pours profusely, and finally the climber overcomes the physical symptoms and makes it to the top."

Howe added that "naturally no training school or camp is going to turn out accomplished rock climbers in a few weeks, but even a brief exposure may help the young person who has gone through training confront other crises in life with more confidence."

Rox Anderson, director of Flying Cloud, another of the Farm and Wilderness Camps, also puts emphasis on the intangibles that young people learn when they have to rely on their own ingenuity in the wilderness. "I feel that more important than learning how to push limits and develop skills is learning to accept limitations, how to be comfortable with yourself and appreciate other people's skills, which in wilderness living you may very well be dependent on.

"Another thing I marvel at," says Anderson, "is how kids, not counselors, end up doing the teaching as they gain competencies and self-respect. They seem to want to share, whether it's their skill at stone oven baking, spinning a yarn around the fire at night, or helping a younger hiker find a basswood tree." (Seasoned basswood limbs are used to make a "bow and drill," more basic than matches for starting a fire.)

Those who get involved with wilderness skills need equipment, of course. A leading U.S. manufacturer of camping goods estimated that in the early 1970's sales of high-quality camping equipment grew by 30 to 40 percent annually.

Equipment means different things to different people, depending on their interests and needs. It may consist of any combination of the following: boots (never optional), matches, first-aid kit, knife, compass, backpack with a tubular lightweight frame that fits the body, cooking kit and plastic water bottle, tent, one-burner stove, poncho or windbreaker along with a sweater and extra socks, sleeping bag and ground cloth, minimum of toilet articles, maximum food in minimum space (meaning freeze-dried items and multipurpose foods like jerky). Prices range from 10¢ for a small box of raisins (a must) to around $185 for a Trailwise Fitzroy III tent (an optional).

The days of taming the wilderness are long gone. Crowding is getting to be a real problem as more and more people "discover" the land. Everywhere that there is growth in wilderness skills there seems to be growth also in awareness that future enjoyment of the wilderness is dependent on "walking gently," as the Sierra Club puts it.

For years the Sierra Club has been teaching courses and guiding young people and family groups into remote areas of the wilderness. Now, according to George D. Webb, Chairman of the Vermont State Group of the Club, "It may prove necessary in certain areas to require permits or to give tests in wilderness knowledge and skills." Training and skills may become mandatory, just as mandatory as good boots and an AP (all-purpose scarf, usually red or navy cotton print, used as dishcloth, headgear, neckerchief, or flag).

Outward Bound, NOLS, and offshoots like Project USE, and Discovery, Inc., of Reston, Virginia, are stepping up their emphasis on care for, rather than conquering of, wilderness environments. And in this process of learning to care, young people are not just learning from, but in many cases, learning side by side with adults.

The young people of today who head into the wilderness are searching for roots and connections that tie them to the land. And the heading back is being done with the élan and enthusiasm of trained troops—troops who are confident in themselves and in their skills and who relish where they're going. □

Handcrafts

By JOHN COYNE
Author (with Tom Hebert) of Getting Skilled, By Hand, *and* This Way Out, *Books on Alternatives to College, Published by E.P. Dutton.*

Every afternoon at Harris High School in Spruce Pine, North Carolina, 17-year-old senior Kenny Pieper leaves classes after the second period and drives six miles through the mountains to the Penland School of Crafts, where he takes courses in silversmithing.

Kenny is taking part in the statewide Industrial Cooperative Training Program, which provides work opportunities for high school students. Most students take jobs in local industry to earn money; Kenny spends his time learning crafts. He has been a student at Penland for a year and a half and has already taken courses in pottery, enameling, jewelry, lapidary, and photography.

Kenny is one of the hundreds of thousands of high-school-age students learning handcrafts with plans for developing this interest into a lifelong career.

In the early 1960's when numbers of students began to "drop out" of traditional career ladders, many turned to handcrafts as a career opportunity. Much of the initial back-to-nature craze of that period was tied up with crafts. Young people were making pottery, weaving, or making candles to provide themselves with incomes while they worked the land.

Young people have discovered that by learning a handcraft skill they can provide themselves with a livelihood. But economics is not the only reason so many young people are turning to crafts. They see crafts as a way of earning a living without having to hold down a nine-to-five job. Having a product they can sell gives them independence from "the system."

Also, of course, working with clay, wood, and fibers is an art. Toshiko Takaezu, an internationally known potter who teaches at Princeton University, explains it this way, "When working with clay, I take pleasure from the process as well as from the finished piece. Every once in a while I am in tune with the clay, and I hear music, and it's like poetry. Those are moments that make pottery truly beautiful for me."

Another reason for the renewed interest in handcrafts is that art programs in elementary and secondary schools across the nation have given students, from a very early age, the opportunity and the pleasure of creating something with their hands. Increasingly, students are able to continue their interest in crafts into degree programs at colleges. In 1962, there were only a handful of college programs in crafts; today there are probably more than 1,000.

It is not necessary, however, to attend college craft courses to become a craftsperson. Crafts are taught everywhere! At YWCA and YMCA, adult education centers, summer craft schools, and craft cooperatives. Of course, interested students can also learn a craft by becoming apprentices to local craftspersons or by just setting up a studio in their folks' basement and teaching themselves.

I know of one special summer crafts school that caters to high-school-age students. It is the Hinckley Summer School of Crafts located on 2,400 acres of wooded campus in Hinckley, Maine. The school offers intensive training for young people in ceramics, weaving, glassblowing, jewelry, and photography. There are also courses in batik, leather, woodworking, and graphics.

Ceramics is the most popular of the crafts—I would estimate that 75 percent of all craftspeople are potters—but the growth in other crafts is also significant. People are making a living by working with metals, fabrics, glass, leather, and wood.

A recent poll by a Louis Harris affiliate showed that 8 percent of Americans are "doing" ceramics. Another study by the World Crafts Council reported that the number of individuals interested in crafts in the United States is increasing at about 20 percent a year.

There are no exact figures on how much money is made from crafts, but it is estimated that annual sales by the total handcraft industry—including craft hobby kits—is more than $1.3 billion. This year at the 11th Annual Northeast Crafts Fair in upstate New York, 500 craftspeople grossed $2 million in retail and wholesale sales.

The majority of today's successful craftspeople first became involved with crafts when they were still in high school. I interviewed a number of them for a series of books I did on the Penland School. Bob

Interest in ceramics, metals, fabrics, glass, leather, wood, and other handcrafts is growing.

Ebendorf, a professor of art at the State University College in New Paltz, New York, and President of the Society of North American Goldsmiths, said he was introduced to jewelry making in his junior year in high school. "[I was] a member of that general crafts class that always seems to be filled with 'hard-to-teach' students. I made the typical copper pin and other small copper forms. I had a teacher who encouraged me. She saw that I had an interest in metalwork and she wanted to develop that interest."

Cynthia Bringle, the resident potter at the Penland School of Crafts, began her work in pottery when she was in junior high school. Because there were no art classes in her high school, she had to study on her own at Saturday classes. Then she enrolled at the Memphis Academy of Arts and took pottery courses. She says, "Soon I was spending most of my spare time in the pot shop. I was there when they opened the doors in the mornings, and I stayed until I was thrown out in the evenings."

A young person who decides to go into a crafts field has several career alternatives. He or she can become a *production* craftsperson, producing in quantity. A number of production potters on the East Coast are grossing more than $40,000 a year in sales from their work. But they are the exception—the average net income is closer to $15,000.

Most craftspeople earn their living by teaching as well as by producing their product. They usually teach short-term courses in their studios, at local community centers, and/or at summer crafts schools. Teaching positions in university or college arts programs are hard to find, especially with today's shrinking enrollments and the cutbacks in higher education budgets.

Many highly skilled craftspeople are using their art and craft skills to design commercial products. This is most common in the textiles industry, where weavers are designing rugs, prints, and fabrics.

Then, of course, there are those who are not primarily engaged in crafts but who find craft skills are helpful in their work. These are the occupational therapists, recreation directors, and people involved with the leisure-time industry.

Interest in crafts is not regional, though young people who have had the opportunity to try crafts because of art classes, summer camps, or local recreation programs are the ones most likely to develop a crafts hobby into a career.

Also, my impression is that a relatively large percentage of craftspeople seem to have had reading and writing difficulties. This may be because they turned to crafts for their creative expression and outlet when they found reading and writing difficult to master.

More women than men are craftspersons. And they are engaged in all crafts from pottery to glassblowing. Several of the outstanding jewelers in America are women. These women are not of the opinion that the interest in metalwork has anything to do with the woman's movement. True, they use hammers, vises, and torches, but the work itself is refined and carefully done. Most women think that their penchant for silversmithing comes more from their interest in jewelry as body decoration than from anything else.

Becoming a successful craftsperson—i.e., earning a livelihood in crafts—is not done overnight. Most people can learn the rudiments of a craft quickly. For example, a person can learn to center, solder, or weave in weeks. But although techniques are easily mastered, to go beyond techniques and create something special takes artistic talent and a strong foundation in three-dimensional design.

The commitment to any craft should not be made lightly. To become a master at a craft, a person will engage in years of study and work and will make a considerable financial investment. But once the craft is learned, it is portable. Craftspeople can set up studios almost anywhere—and they usually do.

For the most part, young craftspeople have favored the hills and valleys and small towns of America. They have sought out peaceful locations that provide them with plenty of space and low rents. Here they pursue their crafts and sell their work at summer fairs throughout the country.

The potential crafts career that Kenny Pieper has selected looks very good to him. "I like doing crafts, working by myself," explains Kenny, "it's something that I can do whenever I want, and it makes me feel independent." By learning these skills early, Kenny is gaining control of his life today and perhaps providing for tomorrow. □

Mini and Trail Biking

By JAMES C. SPARKS
Director of Press Relations, Bozell & Jacobs, New York, and author of Mini and Trail Bikes and How To Make Them Yourself, *Published by E. P. Dutton.*

The movement of the urban dweller to the suburbs and to the hinterlands beyond is but one indicator that Americans want to get back to nature. This is particularly true among the youth of the nation.

Further evidence of this movement back to nature is the increase in participation in outdoor recreational pursuits—hiking, camping, fishing, and hunting. A recent addition to these traditional stalwarts is trail biking.

Trail bikes are designed to be used on rough terrain rather than on paved roads. Hill climbing and other off-the-road activities have always had their devotees, but it wasn't until the early 1960's that significant numbers of American youth took up the sport. That they did so was due to innovative engineering on the part of Japanese manufacturers of motorcycles, matched by innovative promotional campaigns by their American advertising agencies.

Prior to 1960 or so, says Jim Schandler, editor of *Choppers*, a magazine for custom-motorcycle enthusiasts, most American motorcyclists rode large, heavy machines such as Indians or Harley-Davidsons. A minority preferred the lighter, smaller-engined bikes built in Europe. But in either case, the machines were relatively expensive and their engines usually required tinkering. The Japanese, Schandler explains, believed correctly that a huge untapped potential existed in the U.S. market. It consisted, he says, of large numbers of young people who were ready to buy a motorcycle if it was relatively inexpensive and maintenance free, and if it could provide both transportation and recreation.

Some 15 years ago the Japanese filled the void. Their first marketing success in the United States was a small Honda designed for street use. Later they introduced lightweight, dual-purpose machines—Schandler cites the Yamaha DT-1 as an example. These met the price and engineering criteria of the American youth market, and they were designed for use on both street and trail. At the same time, Schandler notes, the advertising for the Japanese bikes improved the image of motorcyclists. Now you could "meet the nicest people" not only "on a Honda" but, so people came to think, on any of the new trim machines.

AMF/Harley-Davidson continues to make their traditional models along with a newer line of lightweight bikes; the firm is the only successful American manufacturer of motorcycles.

To the layperson a trail bike is just another motorcycle. Compared to the street bike, however, it is lighter and higher off the ground, which permits it to negotiate obstacles encountered in the rugged trail country. Its suspension system has more "travel" in it, which enables the bike to take the bumps easier; this reduces wear and tear on both rider and bike. The trail bike's brakes are specially designed for off-the-road conditions. And to provide better traction, its tires are more deeply grooved than the street bike's.

Since a trail bike should be as light as possible, those that are used solely off-the-road often have no electrical apparatus such as lights, horns, and turn signals. Dual-purpose bikes, however, must meet state standards, which require bikes to have such items for registration as passenger vehicles that can operate on the public roads. Although statistics show that 41 percent of motorcycles are dual-purpose bikes, they are obviously not as suited to the trails as the bikes built expressly for use on them.

Many trail-bike riders probably started with minibikes. Homemade minibikes are small one-passenger motorcycles with low frames and elevated handlebars. They were a post World War II phenomenon. Young boys made them from scratch, using engines such as those used in lawnmowers and snow blowers. Making his or her own bike is still an excellent way for a youngster to learn small-engine technology.

The minibikes of today are small-scale motorcycles and are made by most of the major motorcycle firms. On some models, maximum speeds can be controlled by governors, which parents or other supervisors can set at limits that match the youngsters' skills.

Because their wheels and engines are relatively

small, minibikes are generally slower but less stable than the larger trail or street bikes. They can be dangerous when they are driven in a reckless manner. Some observers feel that children riding minibikes should be under adult supervision until they reach the age where they can meet state requirements for a motorcycle permit.

Who rides bikes? A recent Gallup survey taken for the Motorcycle Industry Council showed that 9 in 10 owners of bikes are male. The survey also showed that the median age of owners is 24. Slightly more than one-third (36 percent) are under 21 years of age, 30 percent are 21 to 29, and only 14 percent are over 39.

Surveys taken by some of the leading motorcycle publications show that the average person engaged in motorcycle recreation is in his mid-twenties, is married, and has two children. The majority are employed in junior management or blue-collar occupations.

A central question asked in these surveys was "What do you get out of off-the-road motorcycling?" Most people answered that it gave them a sense of freedom, enjoyment of nature and the out-of-doors, self-satisfaction, and a feeling of "getting away from it all."

Boys between the ages of 10 and 15 or 16 comprise the largest number of minibike riders. Girl riders are usually the sisters of bike owners and hence secondary users of the little vehicles, according to the records.

Street use of minibikes is forbidden in many locales. However, many towns and cities have organized tracks that are supervised by off-duty police or parents of participating youngsters. These tracks serve a constructive role. They permit youngsters to ride if they abide by the rules of the track. Those who breach the rules are warned; those who constantly breach them are banned from the track (the equivalent of losing one's driving license for a significant driving offense).

The state of California must lead the nation in both trail- and minibike-riding activities. It has probably done more than any other state to create facilities and organizations to promote riding as a constructive recreational activity. In addition to the mini tracks, trail-bike parks abound in California. These are usually sponsored by state and federal governments, but on occasion, private enterprise is involved. The parks are stringently supervised to ensure that undesirable elements are kept out. Park officials also protect the land and wildlife in the park.

Several environmental groups look on the use of trail bikes disdainfully, contending that they mutilate the land. Many state governments, however, realize that trail bikers have as much right to enjoy nature as any other citizens and have gone to considerable lengths to permit them use of the land. But because of abuses by motorcyclists, some observers expect much tighter regulation in the near future. For example, racing machines are now prohibited from using many trails in California because they are noisy and because they generate sparks that can cause forest fires.

Just as many of our mores have undergone change, so has our acceptance of these uncanny little vehicles.

The Motorcycle Industry Council also has shown concern about the environmental question. It has publications that remind off-the-road cycle users to respect the environment and fellow users of the public lands.

In light of the soaring numbers of motorcycle registrations, the motorcycle industry has recognized the need for an aggressive safety program. In 1973, Kawasaki, Honda, Suzuki, Yamaha, and Harley-Davidson funded a nonprofit organization, the Motorcycle Safety Foundation, to increase the safety of street cycling through education, instructor preparation, and licensing improvement.

The Foundation has established a clearinghouse for all data and research on motorcycle safety education. Its programs are conducted on a national scale in concert with high schools, colleges and universities, law enforcement agencies, and civic organizations. In many of the programs, motorcycles are made available to high schools and colleges for instructional purposes. These are usually provided by a local distributor who works cooperatively with the schools.

There was a time when a social stigma was associated with motorcycle ownership and operation. Now, however, most people accept the machines as recreational vehicles.

The presence of the motorcycle is a fact of life. Just as so many of our mores have undergone change, so has our acceptance of these uncanny little vehicles. Used intelligently, they offer an exhilarating outlet for the youth of America. □

A National Survey Highlights the Issues

SURVEY OF INSTRUCTIONAL PROBLEMS

Part I—Instructional Problems

Each of the following items is a problem to some teachers in some schools. Check the degree to which each one is a problem to you in your current assignment by using these definitions:

Negligible problem—has *little or no effect* on my work
Moderate problem—has *only limited effect* on my work
Serious problem—has *considerable effect* on my work
Critical problem—has *crucial effect* on my work—a crisis!

	Negligible	Moderate	Serious	Critical
1. My teaching is limited by the quality of instructional materials	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
2. My teaching is restricted by the lack of instructional materials	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
3. The mandated curriculum is not appropriate for my students	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
4. Having to teach handicapped students in regular classes is a problem	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
5. Overemphasis on standardized test scores interferes with my teaching	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
6. There is sex stereotyping in school practices, including textbooks	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
7. Lack of concern with multicultural/bilingual education is detrimental to students	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
8. I work with too many students each day	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
9. I have to spend too much time on noninstructional duties	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
10. My students are chronically absent from school	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
11. Student use of drugs counters my best teaching efforts	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
12. Health and nutrition problems affect the learning of my students	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
13. Too many of my students are indifferent to school	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
14. Disruption of my class(es) by students is a continuing frustration	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
15. The psychological climate of this school is not conducive to learning	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
16. Diagnosing student learning problems is difficult	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
17. Evaluating student achievement is difficult	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
18. I feel frustrated by the inflexible routine of my situation	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
19. Lack of freedom to teach the way I want to makes me less effective with my students	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
20. I feel under pressure too much of the time	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
21. When new curricular programs are initiated, I am not consulted or trained	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
22. Physical facilities of this school limit the kinds of programs provided for students	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
23. I am not assigned to teach what I am best qualified to teach	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
24. My teaching is not evaluated as it should be	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
25. In-service education provided by the district does not meet my needs	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
26. Busing of students is causing new instructional problems	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
27. I get little support from the administration of this school	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
28. The community does not provide needed financial support for students	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
29. Too many parents are apathetic about their children's education	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐
30. I feel threatened by the increasing competition for teaching jobs	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐

In July of this year, NEA completed its third biennial survey of teachers' instructional problems. The Association asked a nationwide sample of its members to indicate on the Survey of Instructional Problems reprinted on these two pages the degree to which certain problems affect their work.

Part I—Instructional Problems —asked the degree to which problems that trouble some teachers in some schools affect teachers in their current assignment; Part II—Special Problems — asked questions about four special issues of national concern: class size, discipline, mainstreaming, and in-service education.→

Part II—Special Problems

Class size, discipline, mainstreaming of handicapped children, and in-service education are four instructional problems of national concern. This section is designed to deal with these issues in greater detail.

1. Teachers are unhappy with the SIZES of their CLASSES for different reasons. Check the degree to which each of the following is a problem to you.

	Negligible	Moderate	Serious	Critical
a. I have too many students with learning disabilities	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐
b. I have too many students who are mentally handicapped	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐
c. I have too many students with physical disabilities	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐
d. I have too many students with emotional problems	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐
e. The socioeconomic backgrounds of my students are too diverse	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐
f. The achievement levels of my students are too heterogeneous	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐
g. I just have too many students for what I am teaching	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐
h. I have too few students for what I am teaching	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐

2. In some school systems handicapped children have been or are being moved from segregated special education classes to regular classrooms for some or all of their instruction (MAINSTREAMING). Has this or is this happening in your school system?

1☐ Yes 2☐ No

If yes, check the degree to which each of the following is a problem in your school system.

	Negligible	Moderate	Serious	Critical
a. Regular classroom teachers are not prepared to handle all kinds of handicapped children	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐
b. Teachers are not consulted before handicapped children are placed in their classes	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐
c. Handicapped children are moved into regular classes without considering their special needs	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐
d. Regular students are adversely affected by mainstreaming	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐
e. Appropriate materials are not provided for teachers and the handicapped children	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐
f. Supporting services, particularly specialists, are not available to help teachers	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐
g. Modifications in sizes of classes are not made to accommodate the increasing demands on teachers	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐

3. There are different kinds of DISCIPLINE problems in schools. Check the degree to which each of the following is a problem to you.

	Negligible	Moderate	Serious	Critical
a. A few students in my classes cause most of the discipline problems	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐
b. Many students in my classes cause discipline problems	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐
c. The values of students and schools are in conflict	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐
d. Too little support is provided by administrators	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐
e. Too little support is given by the parents	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐
f. I fear for my personal safety	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐
g. I fear for the safety of my students	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐
h. I fear for damage to my personal property	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐

4. Does your school system provide IN-SERVICE EDUCATION programs for its teachers?

1☐ Yes 2☐ No

If yes, check the degree to which each of the following is a problem to you.

	Negligible	Moderate	Serious	Critical
a. The in-service education offered is of little value for my job	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐
b. Too little time is allowed for in-service education	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐
c. When new curricula are adopted by the school system, little or no in-service education is provided.	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐
d. In-service education is offered primarily after school, evenings, weekends, or summers	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐
e. In-service education focuses on school system needs rather than on teacher needs	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐
f. In-service education is too general to satisfy my special needs	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐
g. In-service education is not planned cooperatively with teachers	1☐	2☐	3☐	4☐

Before reading the results of the national survey, you may be interested in responding to the Survey questions so that you may compare your answers with the national results.

If you believe too many parents are apathetic about their children's education, if you feel too many of your students are indifferent to school, if you have to work with too many students each day, then you are similar to many other teachers.

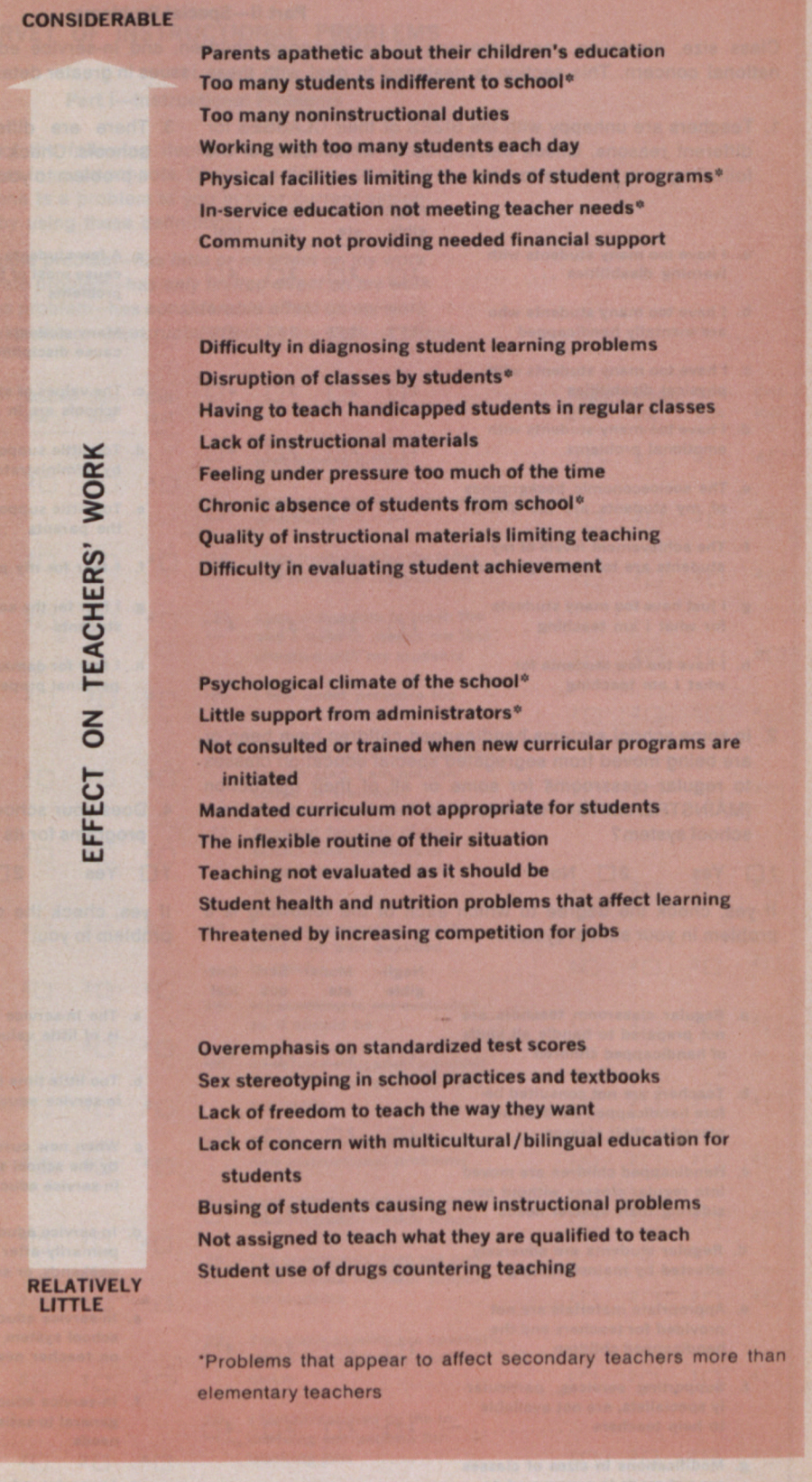
No questionnaire, of course, can include all the problems teachers encounter in their day-to-day teaching, because there are many and they differ from school to school and from teacher to teacher. Nevertheless, the results of this survey can help focus national attention on some common problems that teachers face.

The most common complaints of teachers who were surveyed include the following: large classes with a wide range of student achievement, some students with learning disabilities, others with emotional problems, many students indifferent to school and parents who don't care, facilities that limit educational programs in a community that does not provide needed financial support for education. Another common complaint is that teachers must supervise lunchrooms and playgrounds, take tickets at basketball games, and collect lunch money when they could be planning educational activities. But that's not all!

Some school systems, without consulting teachers, force in-service

THE FINDINGS

Responses showed the following general relationship among items.


CONSIDERABLE
EFFECT ON TEACHERS' WORK
RELATIVELY LITTLE
Parents apathetic about their children's education
Too many students indifferent to school*
Too many noninstructional duties
Working with too many students each day
Physical facilities limiting the kinds of student programs*
In-service education not meeting teacher needs*
Community not providing needed financial support
Difficulty in diagnosing student learning problems
Disruption of classes by students*
Having to teach handicapped students in regular classes
Lack of instructional materials
Feeling under pressure too much of the time
Chronic absence of students from school*
Quality of instructional materials limiting teaching
Difficulty in evaluating student achievement
Psychological climate of the school*
Little support from administrators*
Not consulted or trained when new curricular programs are initiated
Mandated curriculum not appropriate for students
The inflexible routine of their situation
Teaching not evaluated as it should be
Student health and nutrition problems that affect learning
Threatened by increasing competition for jobs
Overemphasis on standardized test scores
Sex stereotyping in school practices and textbooks
Lack of freedom to teach the way they want
Lack of concern with multicultural/bilingual education for students
Busing of students causing new instructional problems
Not assigned to teach what they are qualified to teach
Student use of drugs countering teaching

*Problems that appear to affect secondary teachers more than elementary teachers

education on them that is so general it has little value for the special needs of their jobs. That might be bearable if teachers were not expected to participate in in-service programs after school, in the evenings, and on weekends. Other school systems announce new curriculums but schedule no in-service programs to introduce these curriculums to teachers, who then must turn to a university for help—at their own expense, of course.

Fortunately, not all teachers work under adverse conditions all of the time. Secondary teachers find discipline and student indifference to school much greater problems than do elementary teachers. Junior high teachers feel that too many students each day and mainstreaming are big problems for them, whereas senior high teachers have more concern about the uselessness of in-service education programs and chronic student absenteeism.

In general, secondary teachers seem to feel the effect of adverse conditions on their work more acutely than do elementary teachers. One can speculate on the reason for this. Perhaps the types of problems surveyed were directed more to secondary situations or maybe the age of the students and the smaller sizes of the schools lead to fewer problems at the elementary level or perhaps the organizational patterns of secondary schools make teaching in them more difficult than teaching in elementary schools. The answer may be none of these—or all of these.

Regardless of the teaching level, as teachers gain experience in the

SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF NATIONAL CONCERN

Reasons Teachers Are Unhappy with the Sizes of Their Classes

- Too many students for what they are teaching
- Achievement levels of students too heterogeneous
- Too many students with emotional problems
- Too many students with learning disabilities

Reasons Teachers Have Problems with Mainstreaming
(Placing handicapped children in regular classrooms)

- Modifications in sizes of classes are not made to accommodate increased demands
- Regular classroom teachers are not prepared to handle *all* kinds of handicapped children
- Appropriate materials are not provided regular teachers

Reasons Discipline Is a Problem for Teachers

- Too little support is given by parents
- Only a few students cause most of the problems
- Values of those students and schools are in conflict
- Too little support provided by administrators

Reasons In-Service Education Is a Concern

- Too general to satisfy teachers' special needs
- Of little value for the assignments teachers have
- Not planned cooperatively with teachers
- Focuses on school system needs rather than on teacher needs

classroom are they better able to handle the inevitable problems? Teachers with four or fewer years' experience said these problems affected their work much more than did teachers with 20 or more years' experience. As the number of years of experience increased, the impact of these problems appears to decrease. The obvious implication is that more experienced teachers are better able to grapple successfully with adverse conditions. At the same time, it may be that the longer teachers spend in the classroom, the more they become hardened to adverse conditions and take them in stride.

Some bright spots were reported: Student use of drugs, lack of freedom to teach, and teaching misassignments did not concern teachers on a broad scale. Some teachers do face these problems, however, and when they do, the effects are devastating.

Teaching is a complicated process. Determining what teachers want and need based on instructional problems does not lend itself to simple scientific measurement. What they teach, where they teach, whom they teach, and many other factors must be considered.

A look at other research supports our belief that NEA has identified problems for today and is developing programs to help teachers deal with them. We must remember, however, that conditions in schools and society are in constant flux. The continuous collection of information is always a first step toward better schools.

—Bernard R. Bartholomew, *NEA Research.*

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

"If It Isn't Local, It Isn't Real"

For many years the managing editor of the *Chicago Daily News* had a sign on his desk that read, "If It Isn't Local, It Isn't Real." As teachers in Clarksville, Indiana, Anoka-Hennepin, Minnesota, or Durham City, North Carolina, review the preceding account of the 1976 *national* survey of teachers' instructional problems, it may strike them that the findings, although significant, do not fully reflect conditions in their own schools and communities. National surveys are valuable and necessary for overall planning and direction, but they may or may not reflect a particular local situation.

A teacher's real world is the classroom, the school, and the community in which he or she works. Ask a high school teacher in Braintree, Massachusetts, how things are going, and you will find out that safety and discipline problems are casting a pall over the entire school. For elementary teachers in Anoka-Hennepin, Minnesota, the real world is populated by too many students in overcrowded classrooms.

This is open season on schools. Across the country armchair specialists are engaged in the current national pastime of proclaiming what is wrong with the nation's schools. Blue-ribbon panels of experts, university researchers, and state agency personnel are all offering up solutions to school problems.

The most experienced instructional experts—the teachers who spend their professional lives in classrooms working with students—are seldom asked for their opinions. It is not without irony that those farthest from the classroom seem to believe they are closest to the answers.

Since 1973, about 200,000 teachers in several hundred local associations in more than 30 states have taken part in NEA's Teacher Instructional Needs Assessment (INA) program for local associations. Teachers participating in the program have given their confidential responses to 60 statements about instruction and professional development in their own districts. Although the local INA survey is similar to the national one presented in the previous article, it is more detailed. General concerns covered in the survey include the following:

- Educational programs
- School climate
- Instructional materials
- Community support
- Physical facilities
- Teacher evaluation
- Financial support
- Professional development/in-service education
- Staffing
- Decision making
- Time to teach
- Student services
- Freedom to teach
- Student evaluation.

Sample statements from the survey are as follows: "Available textbooks satisfy instructional needs." "I am free to teach as I see fit."

The responses of an entire district's teacher population are data-processed at NEA and returned to the local association. The data are processed school by school—and

separately for elementary, junior high, and senior high teachers. Local building representatives then take the data for each school back to the teachers in that school for analysis and interpretation. The teachers' task is to reduce general concerns to specific problems and issues that the association can attack.

For example, if junior high teachers show marked concern regarding the statement "Available textbooks satisfy instructional needs," they are then asked to indicate which textbooks and what is specifically wrong with them (e.g., that seventh grade social studies texts are out-of-date). This process is called "documentation."

Once documentation takes place, the local association has a current reliable profile of teachers' perceptions of the local educational scene for each school, each teaching level, and the district as a whole. The stage is set for action by local leaders via negotiations, political action, community pressure on the school board—whatever works to help solve the problem.

NEA is training state and UniServ staff in the use of many different local surveys, including the INA. Those trained then work with teachers to make the most effective use of local survey findings. This is the bottom line, for the INA or any local survey gets its life and its impact from the teachers and staff who use it. It is as useful as they can make it—no more, no less. Information may be power, but not until it is used with purpose.

Teachers may well ask what difference the INA data really make. Are teachers and students any better off after the survey than they were before?

What actually happens in locals that have participated in INA is as varied as the locals themselves. Sometimes nothing happens; sometimes a great deal.

Consider the following illustrations of how some enterprising teachers have used INA data to improve schools in their own communities:

- In Clarksville, Indiana, the INA data reflected an educational community in extreme turmoil. Teachers perceived that the appointed school board did not represent community opinion, that teacher voice in the school program was less than welcome, that communication channels throughout the system were virtually blocked, with teachers learning of school decisions long after they were made.

In 1972, Indiana passed its first bargaining law. In 1973, Clarksville did the needs assessment. In 1974, CEA negotiators and UniServ Director Don Knowland negotiated Clarksville's first contract with the INA findings spread out on their laps. Key provisions of that first-year contract asserted teachers' right to more influence in instructional decision making. Some examples of educational changes made in Clarksville schools since that time follow:

Kindergarten instruction was introduced.

Elementary physical education was increased.

Extra resource rooms for students with learning disabilities were established in elementary schools.

A special education teacher was hired for senior high students with learning problems.

Teachers now have a regular place on the monthly school board agenda to express instructional concerns.

Installation of new curriculum is tied to appropriate in-service education.

With the new-found strength of collective bargaining and the INA findings to guide them, Clarksville teachers have brought tangible progress to their community.

- In Botetourt County, Virginia, teachers and administrators are working jointly on task forces to review the entire in-service program and to search out more effective ways to teach reading. According to Botetourt County teachers, this is the first time in memory that teachers have had any say in instructional planning and decision making.
- In Nampa, Idaho, INA data revealed that elementary and junior high teachers were troubled by the lack of preparation periods. On the other hand, the data revealed that high school teachers had no such concern, because they had preparation periods. What was common knowledge among teachers—that the district countenanced a discriminatory situation between the high schools and the other schools in the system—was now documented. The association intends to make a strong case both in bargaining and with the public to correct the situation.
- In Braintree, Massachusetts, the INA surfaced serious discipline and safety problems at the senior high school. The local developed a "teacher abuse form" for all teachers in the system in which they could specifically document personal loss, vandalism, and abuse. These findings were reported to the membership, the press, and the public.
- In Nashville, Tennessee, a promising young elementary teacher was evaluated for tenure by her principal and labeled a troublemaker with a personality problem. It so happened that the teacher had been chosen as a building representative for the local association and in that capacity had presented teachers' concerns to the principal. Concerns in that school centered on the lack of administrative support for student discipline problems and on the oppressive professional climate that pervaded the school.

When the teacher realized her tenure was in jeopardy, and the reason why, she sought help from local leaders and staff. Nashville had recently done the INA. Survey data for her individual building revealed widespread teacher dis-

"Ultimately, it took the objectivity and integrity of NEA's Teacher Instructional Needs Assessment survey to bring home the school's problems."

satisfaction with the instructional atmosphere of that school.

Armed with the INA evidence and supported by the local president and UniServ staff, the teacher made it known that she would take her case to the highest level of the school system.

At her next and final evaluation for tenure, she passed with flying colors. The Nashville system gained a young and caring teacher, and the instructional climate in that elementary school became more comfortable.

- In Wayne County, Georgia, teachers had long expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that they had no say in their own in-service education. When INA results documented the extent of that dissatisfaction, the new superintendent invited teachers to draw up a plan for the kinds of in-service programs they would like to have in their own schools. Since then, Wayne County teachers have designed in-service days on topics they themselves selected, such as teacher-made tests, more effective record keeping, and relationships between test scores and curriculum.
- In Thomasville, North Carolina, as a result of INA data on funding, the local city council has been asked to increase a supplementary tax for schools to provide additional personnel and salaries—an increase that is within the council's power to grant without an additional referendum.
- In Upper Dublin, Pennsylvania, elementary teachers expressed need for an elementary guidance program. Teachers urged that a guidance counselor be assigned to each elementary building to work on problem prevention and individual pupil development. At the same time that they presented their recommendation to the board, the teachers gave a copy of their report to the local press to inform the community of their actions and concerns.
- In Durham City, North Carolina, where desegregation problems have led to a marked erosion in public support for the schools, teachers view the need to mobilize community backing for the schools as a top priority, and they have used INA data to do this. Teachers found that the survey substantiated their long-standing concerns and developed a position paper based on many of the INA findings. It was presented to the board, the superintendent, and the public. In addition, the local is using the INA findings to screen candidates for county commissioner. (In Durham City, county commissioners control funding for the schools.)
- In Anoka-Hennepin, Minnesota, teachers have long been trying to alert the board and the public to their frustrations with overcrowded classrooms and the detrimental effects overcrowding was having on students. The board looked the other way. It seemed to teachers that the issue was not lack of funds but rather a deliberate decision by the school board to sidestep the issue.

Last year the INA survey strikingly documented the class-size problem. The local used the data as the basis for a flier to take the problem directly to the community. Teachers were advised by legal counsel that they could distribute the flier at parent-teacher evening conferences as long as they did not give it out during the conferences themselves. They placed the fliers in the coffee areas.

The superintendent ordered that the fliers not be distributed. To protest the denial of the constitutional right to be heard, the teachers took their case to the press. Two statewide papers as well as local and metropolitan press and radio picked up the story. In one week, Anoka-Hennepin's class-size problem got more attention than it had received during the whole preceding school year.

On July 26, 1976, the school board authorized funding for a minimum of 50 additional elementary teachers, particularly those with special competencies in reading and math. The board's action was in direct response to the superintendent's request made just 40 days after he had announced that the district had "no plans to significantly change the overall pupil-teacher ratio for the next year."

"Ultimately, it took the objectivity and integrity of NEA's Teacher Instructional Needs Assessment survey to bring home the school's problems. Unlike anything else we've ever done," says AHEA UniServ Director Dick Bernard, "the INA gave us, the board, the administration, and the community an excellent and valid view of the attitudes and frustrations of the teachers in the district."

The overriding purpose of the INA is to increase teacher influence in instructional decision making. Armed with a solid base of information, the right to bargain, and the freedom to speak out, teachers are demonstrating how they can initiate action to create better schools.

—Lois Schaeffer Karasik, *NEA Instruction and Professional Development.*

Weekend College

By **WILBUR CROSS**
Author and Journalist.

"Weekend college" is a term loosely applied to the type of adult education program that can be experienced when two or more days of leisure time are available in sequence. Little known as recently as the mid-1950's, these miniature courses are available today at hundreds of centers. They deal with every subject imaginable, from Chinese and Hindi to creative stitchery, sailplane piloting, astronomy, folk dancing, the cult of violence, communications, homosexuality, gardening, bagpipes, violin making, ecology, witchcraft, architectural ceramics, and "contemplation."

The whole trend to weekend colleges really was launched as a means of meeting the professional needs of individuals who sought advancement in their careers. One of the pioneers was the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, several of whose officials began discussions in 1944 with Michigan State College to develop special facilities for an adult Rural Life Institute. The idea was to provide farmers with residential, on-campus, short courses that would help them keep up with agricultural technology.

Seven years later, the first of the Kellogg-assisted centers was constructed at Michigan State. Other such centers followed at the universities of Georgia, Nebraska, and Oklahoma, and later at England's Oxford University, Columbia, California State Polytechnic College, and the University of New Hampshire. By the end of the 1960's, the idea had taken root in 80 similar centers, which were put into operation independently by colleges and universities around the country.

It was evident that the residential short-course concept, while designed to enhance career potential with on-the-job training, had wide application in many fields of learning.

People long past college age who are actively involved with jobs, careers, households, or volunteer work are finding short residential programs of great value.

Some of them report that the courses help them improve their on-the-job capabilities, switch positions in midstream, obtain raises or promotions, enrich their lives, meet people with similar interests, or find relaxation and leisure-time fulfillment. Others looking toward the day when they will face retirement, report that the courses are a good way to develop hobbies and avocations.

Now that short-term sessions leading to credits are becoming commonplace, more and more people who never set foot in college in their younger years are determined to earn degrees or at least some tangible form of educational recognition. Quite a few members of this new breed of scholar admit to being smitten by the challenge of plunging into completely new subjects, perhaps in order to converse more intelligently about controversial topics, from economics and energy conservation to foreign relations, the political scene, and crime.

Then, too, multitudes of students-come-lately find short residential workshops the most enjoyable, most beneficial way of absorbing the arts—whether painting, sculpture, drama, writing, music, dance, or creative crafts. As active participants, they rub elbows with experts, often notables, in the arts. More importantly, they fulfill opportunities to share their experiences with others as they learn.

Educators at all levels and in many different subject fields are finding new opportunities to benefit from short teaching assignments. In fact, several educators have described the short residential program as one of the healthiest and most promising areas of growth in the whole field of education.

As Fred M. Hechinger of the *New York Times* wrote recently, "Continuing education, long viewed with disdain by many university regulars, has suddenly been discovered as the wave of the future."

Many an educator is now enjoying the rewards of riding the wave.

It used to be that adults with a yen for learning had to squeeze themselves into uncomfortable school desks at dimly lit night schools, often too tired from a hard day's work to concentrate properly on what the instructor was trying to get across.

But with the recent boom in adult education, this has changed dramatically. Not only are brightly lighted, well-equipped public schools open to adults on a year-round basis, but adults have another choice. Today, they can combine the educational process with a relaxing, residential situation. □

This article was adapted from a chapter of *The Weekend Education Source Book*. Copyright © 1976 by Wilbur Cross. Reprinted by permission of Harper's Magazine Press.

Why Teachers Want National Health Insurance

For the third year in a row, the NEA Representative Assembly has called on Congress to enact a comprehensive, universal, national health insurance program. Teachers are concerned about this issue because they share with all Americans the problems associated with runaway costs in health care—exorbitant hospital bills, expensive medicines and devices, and sky-high doctor fees. And in many cases, they have very limited access to adequate preventive and therapeutic care.

Moreover, teachers are finding it more and more difficult each year to negotiate adequate health benefits in their employment contracts. Teachers without such benefits, including those whose protection has lapsed because they have lost their jobs, find private health insurance premiums far beyond the reach of their limited resources.

The NEA's interest in national health insurance actually goes back many years—to the time when Congress and the nation began studying whether the federal government should provide some assistance to large segments of the population who were unable to afford basic health care. NEA supported the Medicare and Medicaid programs enacted 11 years ago to help the poor and the aged. But during the years since these programs began, little has been done to solve other problems in the health care field: alarmingly steep escalation of medical costs, maldistribution of the nation's health care resources, and lack of enforceable quality standards in health care services.

For the elderly and the poor, these problems have been compounded. Medicare recipients are being forced to pay more in deductibles and coinsurance, and the poor are facing drastic cuts in Medicaid benefits. Further, the health insurance industry has been unable or unwilling to help those who cannot pay premiums or who are considered "high risks" (women, generally, and anyone with a history of serious illness).

Congress has recognized the social and political consequences of allowing the nation to drift toward a health care catastrophe and has held extensive hearings during the past two years on a variety of health insurance proposals. NEA joined with other professional groups, consumer advocates, major labor unions, and church groups in support of the Health Security bill introduced by Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Representative James Corman (D-CA). Their proposal rests on the premise that health care must be considered a basic right. NEA believes that until this right is guaranteed, other recognized rights—such as the right to speak, to associate freely, to learn, to work, or to vote—are meaningless. People who are too sick to do these things are deprived of rights otherwise guaranteed by law, to the extent that appropriate health care is beyond their grasp.

NEA believes that if health care is to be established as a right, its delivery must be changed to accord with sound social, economic, and administrative principles.

The Association recognizes that these changes are controversial. Such vested interests as the health insurance industry, the providers of health care (individual, corporate, and institutional), and the builders and suppliers of equipment and facilities feel threatened by what they perceive as a federal "takeover" of the health care system.

The problem, in NEA's view, is that the United States does not have a health care system, and the fact is that the Health Security bill does not propose nationalization of health care. It does, however, propose systematic changes in the way money is spent on health maintenance and care. This money—more than $100 billion a year—is now being spent on a fragmented, uncoordinated *nonsystem* by individual consumers; health insurance companies; and Medicare, Medicaid, and other federal and state programs. In a nonsystem, accountability gets lost, and the consumer is the ultimate loser. The consumer, in fact, is in double jeopardy, paying heavily for minimal health insurance benefits and being taxed to pay for government-supported programs whose value is constantly eroded by inflation.

Proposals that fail to create order out of the present chaotic state of health care can only exacerbate the problem. Such patchwork, add-on legislation as mandatory employer-employee plans and the so-called catastrophic bills would simply delay vital and constructive reform. The mandatory plans, for example, would exclude the unemployed and their families and make no provision for the retired;

the catastrophic-illness bills before Congress would provide no benefits until an individual had paid $2,000 in doctor bills and spent 60 days in a hospital (at his or her own expense).

Health Security, by contrast, would scrap existing federal programs that provide entitlement based on income. Gone forever would be the needs tests, the deductibles, and the coinsurance payments that place the individual consumer on the demeaning level of a beggar. Gone, too, would be the billions of pieces of paper that are shuffled around in the processing of claims.

The comprehensive approach of Health Security would depress rather than inflate costs. Its built-in system of advance budgeting would protect all interests and encourage greater efficiency in the delivery of health care. Under Health Security, people would pay for comprehensive services when they are well and working, not when they are ill. A full range of preventive, routine, and catastrophic health services would be available when they are needed instead of when they can be afforded. Total health care would be paid for through an equitable social insurance system, with employers, employees, and the federal government splitting the cost. As a result, a family's health costs would be predictable and easy to budget.

Health Security would actively encourage more efficient organization and equal distribution of existing health personnel and provide special training of health professionals and other skilled individuals. A resources development fund would be established to support innovative health programs, particularly in personnel, education, and group-practice development.

Financial, professional, and other incentives would be built into the system to encourage organized arrangements for health care, such as health maintenance organizations and other prepaid group-practice plans, and to stimulate the movement of health professionals into areas in need of medical services.

The financing mechanism of Health Security would be based in part on payroll deductions and in part on general revenues. Should Congress adopt this system, employees would pay 1 percent of their first $21,000 gross income; self-employed individuals would pay 2.5 percent of their first $21,000; and employers would pay 3.5 percent of total payroll. The employee contribution would be in place of the 0.9 percent now being collected for Medicare.

Although Health Security would cover the entire population, individuals would be free to choose their own physicians. National quality control standards for providers of health care, however, would encourage people to consult physicians participating in the Health Security program.

The 94th Congress made substantial progress in its consideration of national health insurance. The record of the hearings runs into thousands of pages, and advocates of all persuasions had an opportunity to present their cases fully.

The 95th Congress, convening in January, will not start from scratch but will debate three basic arguments set forth by the opposition to a comprehensive, universal plan.

The first argument is that the nation cannot afford a program like Health Security. NEA believes, however, that the nation cannot afford to perpetuate increasingly costly, inefficient, and inequitable arrangements.

The second argument is that government is incapable of administering a Health Security system. NEA believes this argument is absurd. A well-drawn law can be administered justly and efficiently, and Congress is exercising its budgetary and oversight procedures more and more effectively.

The third argument is almost never voiced openly. It is that the federal government should not spend money on people "who aren't making it on their own." This argument simply flies in the face of justice, decency, and humaneness.

NEA believes the concepts of Health Security are eminently sensible. It is a social insurance bill, but it is not a socialized medicine proposal. Government intervention for the common good is a respected American tradition; government ownership of industry is not. NEA does not support the format of European national health systems, and the Health Security bill avoids the pitfalls of those plans. Rather, it builds on the experience and excellence that we have and does away with everything that stifles rights and restricts opportunity for all.

— *NEA Government Relations.*

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Ward Cannel is an award winning journalist and nonmusician. He was mystified by the fact that he could be given an assignment to write about the atomic bomb, and within three weeks understand its structure. But over 30 million people own a far less complicated instrument, the piano, and still can't play it (often after years of study). Why? His investigation led him to discoveries that enabled him to play the piano himself—something he had never been able to do before—and show you how to do it, too!

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2. In order to make music, you have to know your scales and do your exercises fluently. It takes a year at the least—and closer to two—before your study pays off and you are prepared to play the piano. There are no shortcuts. **WRONG.**

3. Music is a very complicated study filled with rules and regulations which only a genius can understand. **WRONG!**

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able role. The therapist coordinates the three, using information from all, to come up with a program which will be acceptable to all.

Essentially, this is a form of contract therapy. The child knows ahead of time what to anticipate, what responsibilities to meet, and what the consequences are for meeting and for failing to meet them.

Punishment is rarely helpful in enabling the child to return to school. Rewards do not typically facilitate improvement in school attendance but are useful in affording the parents the opportunity for assuaging their own conflict over forcing their child into an intrinsically painful situation.

The teacher can be extremely helpful by tolerating the child's initial upset when the child reenters the class. The child may cry, have tantrums, or express anger or even fury at the teacher for keeping him or her in class. By being firm and supportive, the teacher can allow the child to become accustomed to the classroom again.

This initial state of protest typically is brief—usually it lasts a week or so. In a severe case of a child who has been overindulged or who is in extreme panic, it may continue much longer.

If the teacher is unwilling to tolerate a temporarily disruptive influence in the classroom and refuses to allow the child to stay, all efforts at treatment (in that class) are nullified. The therapist, in turn, must be available to the teacher whenever difficulties arise.

The teacher's active participation is crucial not only at the very beginning of the school-phobic child's reentry into the classroom but also as treatment progresses. Since the therapeutic tack is to keep the child in school for increasingly longer periods of time and finally full time, the teacher has to help work toward the stipulated goals. At the same time, the teacher provides the therapist with indispensable information about the child's tolerance for staying in school.

The child's anxiety will get worse after school absences, whether for weekends, vacations, or illnesses. Therefore, except when seriously ill, the child should attend school.

Teachers, counselors, and administrators working with a school-phobic child must avoid actions that will aggravate the problem. Here are some points to remember.

As mentioned earlier, do not suggest a change in school or class. Trying to make school easier or less demanding doesn't help. Yet parents often ask for a change, blaming other children or the teacher for their child's difficulties. Sometimes, too, the child wants a change, hoping that this simple maneuver will magically do the trick. Class change is always undesirable, however, because new situations regularly aggravate separation anxiety.

Do not arrange for home instruction, either; it communicates to parents and child that the child doesn't have to get back to school.

Do not suggest to the child that he or she stay in school longer or try to do something other than what has been stipulated previously. Teachers and other school staff are understandably eager to see the child get well as quickly as possible. Therefore, if a child is progressing nicely, they sometimes try to encourage the child to do more than what has been agreed upon with the parents and the therapist. This is an absolute *don't*. Why? The school-phobic child who is confronted with unexpected, new demands from the teacher will perceive the classroom as an unknown situation where unpredictable demands may arise at any time. The child may become mistrustful and may refuse to take a chance by going to school. Therefore no one at school should ever make new demands, even if the child seems able to do more. Rather, the teacher should tell the therapist how the child is progressing; then the therapist can use this information in modifying the agreed upon plan with the child.

To relieve the anguish of school phobia, thus making a normal childhood possible, is a task that requires teamwork—the role of the teacher is extremely important. Anyone who undertakes the responsibility of treating a school-phobic child without involving school personnel is doing the child a serious disservice. □

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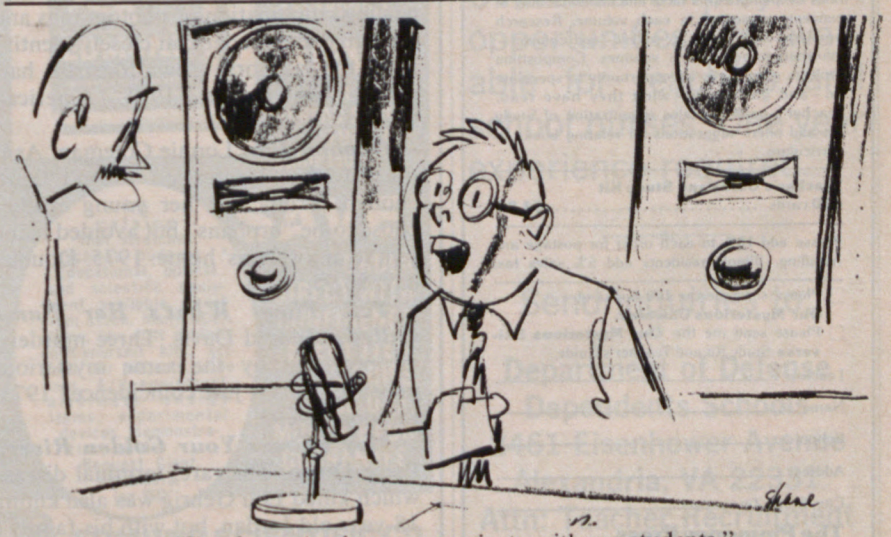

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This list presents books published in the past year that are recommended as good recreational reading for young adults. The books were chosen on the basis of young adult appeal; they meet acceptable standards of literary merit and provide a variety of subjects for different reading tastes as well as a broad range of reading levels. Selection was made by a committee of the Young Adult Services Division of the American Library Association.

Single copies are available free (with self-addressed mailing label and 26¢ in stamps) from YASD Office, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago 60611.

Many books in the following list are available in Braille, talking books, or large print. Consult your Regional Library for the Blind for information.

Heroes of the Horrors. Calvin Beck. All those movie monster favorites—Karloff, Lugosi, Chaney, and Price—in a splendid brew of photos and text. 1975. Macmillan, $12.95; paper, $7.95.

A Time To Be Born. David Bell, M.D. A two-pound "preemie" and a newborn addict were only two of the many babies that Dr. Bell, a young pediatrician, cared for and also deeply cared about. 1975. Morrow. $5.95.

Fighting Back. Rocky Bleier with Terry O'Neill. Rocky's story of overcoming the battle wounds of Vietnam through rigid self-discipline makes the Super Bowl seem worthwhile. 1975. Stein & Day. $8.95.

Almost Home: A Life-Style. David and Maggie Cavagnaro. Through the appealing combination of photographs and narrative, the reader can closely identify with the authors' down-to-earth harmony with nature. 1975. American West. $20.

Orphan Jim. Lonnie Coleman. As if life in the Depression wasn't hard enough, Trudy and her young brother chose to be "orphans" but avoided being sent to an orphans' home. 1975. Doubleday. $6.95.

Tell Them What's Her Name Called. Mildred Davis. Three murders, all preceded by the same mysterious message. Was it just coincidence? 1975. Random. $6.95.

May I Cross Your Golden River? Paige Dixon. The rare, terminal disease which killed Lou Gehrig was also killing 18-year-old Jordan, but with his family's support he tried to lead a normal life. 1975. Atheneum. $7.95.

Deathbird Stories: A Pantheon of Modern Gods. Harlan Ellison. In these tales set in some future time, the objects and rites of man's worship are stretched to the limits of their believability and horror. 1975. Harper. $8.95.

Rescue Squad. Larry Ferazani. What it's really like to be a member of a fire department rescue squad, with all the joys and tragedies, the emotional and physical costs. 1974. Morrow. $7.95.

The Clairvoyant Countess. Dorothy Gilman. Exotic Madame Karitska and her psychic powers help the police handle some of their more distressing dilemmas: robbery, murder, voodoo possession, and a missing person. 1975. Doubleday. $6.95.

The Women and the Men. Nikki Giovanni. Poems, from the heart and soul of a spirited young woman, that speak directly to the lives of young and old, women and men. 1975. Morrow. $5.95.

The Eagle Has Landed. Jack Higgins. In a small English town, a reporter uncovers the hidden grave of German soldiers and a suspenseful story of a Nazi plot to kidnap Churchill. 1975. Holt. $8.95.

Rumblefish. S. E. Hinton. Brothers, caught in an environment of violence, are as incapable of changing their behavior as are the fighting fish who battle to their death. 1975. Delacorte. $6.95.

Of Love and Death and Other Journeys. Isabelle Holland. The death of her lovable, easy-going mother forces 15-year-old Meg to adjust to a new life with the father she had resented but never known. 1975. Lippincott. $5.95.

The New Vigilantes. James David Horan. Eight Vietnam veterans released from prison camp return to the United States to find justice a travesty and decide to take the law into their own hands. 1975. Crown. $7.95.

Looking for Miracles: A Memoir About Loving. A. E. Hotchner. Results are hilarious and poignant when Aaron masquerades as an experienced camp counselor to get himself and his younger brother into a summer camp. 1975. Harper. $7.95.

The Survivors. Kristin Hunter. Each was a survivor—Miss Lena, independent businesswoman, and B. J., a tough, appealing street kid—but they learned that they needed each other. 1975. Scribner's. $7.95.

Is That You, Miss Blue? M. E. Kerr. Ups and downs in the lives of three teenage girls in a boarding school where the unforgettable Miss Blue was "the best teacher" in spite of her unusual habits. 1975. Harper. $6.50.

Seal Woman. Ronald Lockley. Truth and fantasy blend in this haunting story of an Irish girl who became a princess of the seals and of the man she chose as her prince. 1975. Bradbury. $6.95.

Eric. Doris Herold Lund. Told, at 17, that he has leukemia, Eric crowds his dreams for the future—college, sports, love—into the short time he has left. 1974. Lippincott, $7.95; Dell, $1.75.

You Can Get There from Here. Shirley MacLaine. Invited to visit the People's Republic of China, the author and a group of American women were not prepared for what they saw and learned. 1975. Norton. $7.95.

Circus. Alistair MacLean. It took a five-man circus act with a psychic tightrope artist to get in and out of an East European prison safely. 1975. Doubleday. $6.95.

The Intruders. Pat Montandon. A San Francisco television star becomes perplexed and terrified by the intrusion of unexplained violence into her glamorous hilltop home. 1975. Coward, McCann. $8.95.

The Greatest: My Own Story. Muhammad Ali and Richard Durham. Heavyweight boxing champ and outrageous poet, Muhammad Ali, reveals the man behind the gloves. 1975. Random. $10.95.

Z for Zachariah. Robert C. O'Brien. In a peaceful valley, two survivors of an atomic holocaust are brought together —one a self-sufficient young girl, the other a killer bent on killing again. 1975. Atheneum. $6.95.

Representing Super Doll. Richard Peck. Darlene Hoffmeister, beautiful but dumb Miss Hybrid Seed Corn, sets out on the Beauty Contest Road and runs into some unexpected traffic. 1974. Viking, $5.95; Avon, 95¢.

Headman. Kin Platt. Owen's desperate fight for survival through the streets of Los Angeles, in a "rehabilitative" youth camp, and as "headman" of a gang is told in swift, sharp, and realistic street language. 1975. Morrow. $5.95.

Do Black Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Up? John R. Powers. Doing battle with an army of pimples, being a teenager, and spending four

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BEST BOOKS
(Continued)

years in a southside Chicago high school far exceeded Eddie's worst suspicions. 1975. Regnery. $7.95.

Feral. Berton Roueché. What happens to a fictional, rural Long Island community when stray cats turn wild and terrorize the town's residents? 1974. Harper, $5.95; Simon & Schuster, $1.50.

God's Dog. Hope Ryden. A naturalist's two-year field study of coyotes results in a compassionate plea for changes in our attitudes toward these misunderstood creatures. 1975. Coward. $12.50.

Women of Wonder: Science Fiction Stories by Women About Women. Pamela Sargent. These exceptional stories show that science fiction is no longer a field completely reserved for men. 1975. Vintage. $1.95.

The Prometheus Crisis. Thomas N. Scortia and Frank G. Robinson. Prometheus, a nuclear power station: Did human error, sabotage, or carelessness cause the final breaking point? 1975. Doubleday. $8.95.

The Lion's Paw. D. R. Sherman. An obsessed white hunter, a young bushman, and a crippled lion confront one another in the conflict for survival. 1975. Doubleday. $6.95.

Enchanted Pilgrimage. Clifford Simak. A strange, enchanted, allegorical journal in a world where elves, gnomes, and goblins are as normal as bacon and eggs. 1975. Putnam, $6.95; Berkley, $1.25.

Minamata. W. Eugene and Aileen Mioko Smith. Using their cameras, the Smiths have recorded, for all the world to see, the horrors of industrial pollution which has killed or disabled over 800 people in a Japanese town. 1975. Holt, $20; paper, $10.

If You Could See What I Hear. Tom Sullivan and Derek L. T. Gill. Tom Sullivan refused to let blindness interfere with school or sports, his marriage, his career, or his life. 1975. Harper. $7.95.

How Democracy Failed. Ellen Switzer. Personal reminiscences of Germany under Hitler from people who were only teenagers then. 1975. Atheneum. $7.50.

Doonesbury Chronicles. G. B. Trudeau. No one can feel the pulse of the world like Garry Trudeau, whose satirical look at the sixties and early seventies is a real delight. 1975. Holt, $12.95; paper, $6.95.

The Eden Express. Mark Vonnegut. Kurt Vonnegut's son reflects on his life in the counterculture and his battle with schizophrenia. 1975. Praeger. $8.95.

Country of the Heart. Barbara Wersba. A brief, poignant romance between a dying older woman who is a famous poet and a young man who aspires to be a writer. 1975. Atheneum. $5.95.

Massacre at Fall Creek. Jessamyn West. Seventeen-year-old Hannah Cape was only one person affected by the first trial (in 1824) of white men accused of murdering Indians. 1975. Harcourt. $8.95.

The Killing Gift: A Novel. Bari Wood. Does Jennifer Gilbert really have the psychic power to kill? 1975. Putnam. $8.95. □

BOOKS

The Immortal Profession: The Joys of Teaching and Learning by **Gilbert Highet.** Weybright and Talley. 223 pp. $10.

In this excellent book, Gilbert Highet, an emeritus professor of classics at Columbia, has skillfully analyzed why teachers are among the more fortunate professionals. Fortunate because teaching is a most pleasant occupation, fostering a love of learning, a love of students, a respect for the mind, and an invigorating life. Fortunate, also, because the learning that accompanies teaching helps teachers to enjoy life as well as earn a livelihood. Learning from books, undertaking new intellectual experiences, and practicing a new art can help the mind to grow even as the body slowly dies and the emotions grow dull. As long as sloth does not interfere, both teaching and learning can bring deep pleasure, because they help to make teachers complete.

Highet demonstrates a sympathetic understanding of today's college students with all of the distractions competing for their attention. He also recognizes the difficulties inherent in good teaching, including the need for constant self-renewal and the application of effective teaching strategies.

He devotes one chapter to teaching college professors how to teach—a practice almost unheard-of at the college level. Highet paints a picture of the model professor: one who lives the scholarly, not stuffy, life of humility, devotion, organization, and collaboration—and enjoys every minute of it.

The Immortal Profession will be of particular interest to university professors and to any teachers who need a "shot in the arm."

Reviewed by **Charles W. Good,** *professor of education, West Chester (Pennsylvania) State College.*

Schooling in Capitalist America by **Samuel Bowles** and **Herbert Gintis.** Basic Books. 340 pp. $13.95.

Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis have written a straightforward Marxist critique of American education. Their real target, however, is not the schools, but the capitalist society the schools serve. They have amassed enormous quantities of economic, sociological, and historical data to buttress their argument against American education and American society, but their use of these data is highly partisan and tendentious.

Education, they charge, "plays a major role in hiding or justifying the exploitative nature of the U.S. economy." The capitalist economy, since it is hierarchical, bureaucratic, and corporate, has many workers and few bosses. Power, status, and income are unequally distributed. Workers, realizing that they are trapped into earning profits for an anonymous boss, are deeply unhappy.

Bowles and Gintis argue that this "totalitarian" economy has been propped up for generations by educational reformers, who designed a school system to teach children docility and industrially appropriate work habits. Worse, the school system allegedly reproduces the inequities of the larger social order: High-status children are schooled to be bosses, while poor children are schooled to be drones.

The authors see the antiauthoritarianism of the 1960's as the basis for a "socialist" revolution that will bring about an egalitarian, humane society. This is to be initiated by infiltrating and controlling "existing capitalist institutions" like unions, schools, the media, and government.

Though they call their new order "socialist," it seems to be based, not on the socialism of democratic states like Britain or Israel, but rather on the so-called socialism of totalitarian states like the Soviet Union, Cuba, and China (the authors find "some aspects of their work downright inspiring").

The trick in this book is that American schools and society are scrutinized against a utopian standard and, of course, fall short, while the communist states and their schools are not examined at all. In a book of 340 pages, this can hardly be an inadvertent oversight.

Even the most superficial appraisal of communist societies reveals that they are farther from utopia than the United States, particularly when one considers freedom as a value along with equality and fraternity. Despite its egalitarian rhetoric, the Soviet Union lags far behind the United States in providing mass higher education. And, thanks to Soviet sociologists, who only recently acquired sufficient academic freedom to study the social origins of Soviet students, it has been amply documented that class differences have persisted and have been reinforced through the schools. There has been no free scholarship in China or Cuba, but we do have Ken Ling's *The Revenge of Heaven,* which is a chilling autobiographical account of education in China.

Further, there is nothing especially capitalistic about bureaucracy and hierarchical organization. These are features of modern industrialized states, regardless of political ideology; in fact, in states where there is no significant private sector, the state bureaucracy is far more rigid and stratified than any capitalist enterprise.

What is most puzzling is the authors' notion that antiauthoritarian students and workers would feel at home in a state like China or Cuba, where free expression is systematically curtailed. Perhaps they believe that an absence of protest signifies an absence of dissidence. They fail to acknowledge that communist schools purposefully inculcate conformity and docility, not critical thinking.

One thing must be said for the capitalist state: It not only tolerates, it rewards its critics. This study was written with a grant from the Ford Foundation and published by a capitalistic publisher. Would-be social critics in the societies that Bowles and Gintis hail as inspiring examples are not afforded such opportunities.

Reviewed by **Diane Ravitch,** *assistant professor of history and education, Teachers College, Columbia University; author of* The Great School Wars, New York City, 1805-1973.

Raising Children in Modern America: Problems and Prospective Solutions edited by **Nathan B. Talbot, M.D.,** and ***Raising Children in Modern America: What Parents and Society Should Be Doing for Their Children*** by **Nathan B. Talbot, M.D.** Little, Brown. Respective-

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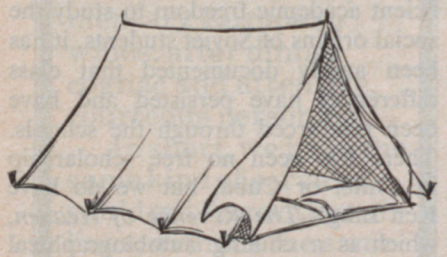

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BOOKS
(Continued)

ly 590 pp. $17.50; 180 pp. $8.95.

These books are the result of a Harvard University Interfaculty seminar which began in 1972. The first is a collection of 27 essays from the seminar, edited by its chairman, Nathan B. Talbot, a professor of pediatrics at the Harvard Medical School. The second, which Talbot wrote, condenses "the essence" of the seminar's findings.

Two notes of clarification: First, not all contributors to the seminar were Harvard faculty members, and second, these books do not constitute the intellectual's alternative to Dr. Spock. They have little to say to parents about the care and feeding of children. Rather, they examine a number of broad issues for social policy from the vantage points of different disciplines and backgrounds. These issues include population growth, psychological aspects of child development, health, education, child abuse, the effects of poverty and racism on children, and public service delivery.

The more interesting of the two books is the more expensive essay collection. It suffers, however, the

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chronic ailments of essay collections: the related problems of focus, purpose, and intended audience.

Some essays attempt to summarize in 15 to 20 pages the state of social science knowledge in vast areas of inquiry. Sheldon White's essay on socialization and Jerome Kagan's essay on child development are two creditable examples. Inherently, however, such summaries give short shrift to subtleties, complexities, and controversies within those fields, at best stating their existence. As summaries, they break no new ground (except for an occasional suggestive remark, such as Kagan's assertion that "children do not require any specific actions from adults in order to develop optimally," save those imposed by a given culture). Essays of this sort appear aimed at audiences who wish a brief introduction to complex topics about which they know next to nothing.

Other essays summarize personal viewpoints or theories. Thus, in 15 pages, Urie Bronfenbrenner summarizes his belief that the "roots of alienation" can be found in a combination of America's failure to provide adequate services for families, the absence of constructive social roles for young people, and the tension between economic imperatives and family life which has pulled parents and other adults out of the lives of children. He suggests broad policy to counter these trends. Essays such as Bronfenbrenner's provide a brief introduction to interesting and influential works. But these works are themselves controversial, far from "proven," and no breath of controversy or dissent stirs in the book.

Still other essays summarize recent research on somewhat more circumscribed topics: e.g., child abuse, teenage use (or disuse, as the data suggest) of contraceptives. Teachers may find particularly interesting Gerald Lesser's brief but lucid discussion of the educative potential, limits, and shortcomings of television and George Richmond's description of "microsociety school," a school where classrooms are structured and curriculum organized as an extended simulation of society.

Conspicuously absent from the essay collection are contributions from historians, anthropologists, or economists—contributions which might have helped place the issues discussed in the perspectives of time, of culture, and of the economic forces which influence the shape of families and their daily travails.

This lack of perspective becomes a major flaw in Talbot's summary of summaries. He tends to see almost all "problems" as individual in nature—rooted either in biological deficits, poor health, or inadequate parenting. Social and economic roots are obscured.

Solutions become a matter of patching up individuals and/or families through the medium of well-planned, professionally staffed services. The result is a familiar list of warmed-over liberal remedies: national health insurance, career education, parent education, youth-serving-youth projects, sex education, and so on. While there is a case to be made for each, Talbot's discussion is threadbare and ignores rather completely the problems and limitations of each, as well as the strong intellectual challenges mounted against liberal reform in recent years—from left and right.

His final (and chief) recommendation is for a "universal child-family screening and support program" which would "identify major deficiencies in the child's social and material environment" and keep track of them from womb through adolescence in a data bank. The program, he says, "should be geared in a benevolent and supportive way." Perhaps some readers will applaud this suggestion. I found it chilling.

Reviewed by **Richard H. deLone,** *assistant director, Carnegie Council on Children, New Haven, Connecticut.*

A Guide to Sources of Educational Information by **Marda Woodbury.** Information Resources Press. 371 pp. $25.

Published to assist those doing research on topics in education, this reference work describes more than 700 sources of information. The author does not limit herself merely to books but identifies machine-readable data bases (for example, ERIC, which reproduces research reports on microfiche), tests, government information sources, and institutions that might be helpful to a researcher. Of particular interest is the chapter on state libraries. In this section, Woodbury gives brief descriptions of libraries that maintain comprehensive collections in the field of education.

Chapter One will be helpful to the beginning researcher since it defines the research question. As an aid to clear thinking and, thus, to clear writing, it should prove invaluable to undergraduate and graduate students alike.

The author's descriptions of printed reference works and their contents are extremely clear. She discusses disadvantages candidly and mentions high prices when they are a factor.

The guide contains a tremendous amount of information. Therefore, it is not surprising to find a few errors, such as an out-of-date address for the National Science Teachers Association. The mistakes are minor, however, compared to the book's mass of helpful information. And they do remind the user that entries must always be checked for accuracy.

The high cost of this book will deter many potential buyers. It should be available in most professional and academic libraries, however.

Reviewed by **Mary K. Jordan,** *librarian, NEA Center, Washington, DC.*

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

John Ryor, NEA President; Terry Herndon, NEA Executive Director.

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AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS

The following 16mm sound/color films are recommended by William J. Cuttill (with the assistance of Beverly Teach), Indiana University Audio-Visual Center, as representative of those available for use in exploring various areas of the social studies. Further information concerning these films and their availability can be obtained from the producers/distributors indicated by the numbers in parentheses.

Angel and Big Joe. 27 min. Depicts the growth of a strong friendship between Angel, a young Mexican-American migrant worker, and Big Joe, a telephone repairman, which results in Angel's having to make a difficult decision. Grades 4-10. (6)

The Beekeeper. 13 min. Uses close-up photography to examine the inside of a hive, the hatching of bees, and the distinguishing characteristics and functions of the various types of bees. Grades 4-8. (1)

Dairy Products: From Moo to You. 15 min. Traces the transformation of milk into many of its products. Grades 1-7. (3)

Different Folks. 16 min. Explores the problems of an adolescent whose parents have reversed traditional family roles and who discovers that apparent sex roles can be deceiving. Grades 5-12. (2)

Never Say You Can't Until You Try. 11 min. Depicts individuals learning such skills as tying shoes and swimming to show that the acquisition of new skills is often controlled by one's readiness to try. Grades 1-8. (5)

The Saga of the Sea Otter. 25 min. Studies the life of the sea otter and its environment. Grades 3-12. (7)

Scoopergoop. 14 min. Reveals to students how TV commercials appeal to their desires to be big, smart, popular, and entertained in order to sell products that may have few of their advertised values. Grades 1-7. (4)

Producers or distributors: (1) ACI Productions, 35 W. 45th St., New York 10036. (2) Agency for Instructional Television, 1111 W. 17th St., Bloomington, IN 47401. (3) Centron Educational Films, 1621 W. 9th St., Lawrence, KS 66044. (4) Churchill Films, 662 N. Robertson Blvd., Los Angeles 90069. (5) Guidance Associates, 757 3rd Ave., New York 10017. (6) Learning Corp. of America, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York 10019. (7) Picture Film Distribution Corp., 43 W. 16th St., New York 10011. □

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CIRCLE QUICK-ACTION CARD NO. 27

CLASSROOM TIPS

By JANE TYLOR FIELD
Retired Teacher of English and Creative Writing, Chula Vista, California.

These are suggestions made or collected by Mrs. Field, and she urges NEA members to send in interesting and useful teaching ideas on the elementary and secondary levels for possible use in future issues. Mrs. Field asks that those who submit classroom tips keep copies of their material, as she cannot return the originals.

Mail suggestions to Box CT, Today's Education, 1201 16th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

Ever hear of ERIC? The initials stand for Educational Resources Information Center. There may be one in your area, and Maxine K. Sitts, publications director of ERIC at Stanford University, sends along hypothetical examples (compiled by Emily Raskin, publications assistant) of how ERIC can be useful.

Example one: A women's basketball coach at a Northeast college might want to enter her team in the area's intercollegiate tournament. If the administration says interest in women's basketball is insufficient to justify the expense, the coach could call a center in Cambridge, Massachusetts, for information to help make her case. From ERIC, the center would produce a list of references dealing with the content and implications of Title IX. Armed with this information, the coach might very well cause the administration to reverse its stand.

Example two: A health education teacher in Columbus, Ohio, concerned about alcohol use by high school students, might visit the ERIC Clearinghouse at Ohio State University to find recent film titles on teenage alcoholism. Searching ERIC manually, the teacher could go through its publication RIE (*Resources in Education*) from 1974 on. A new descriptor in the ERIC system, "Filmographies," and the descriptor "Alcohol Education" would prove useful. The teacher might find several documents listing specific films on the subject, including the distributors and prices.

Example three: A teacher in Cupertino, California, who is looking for effective ways of translating metrics for elementary students could start at the Cupertino Public Library, which is equipped to do computer searches of the ERIC data base. The search might turn up 50 research papers, curriculum guides, and bibliographies that are not on the usual library or bookstore shelves. The teacher could then study appropriate ones in the library's microfiche collection.

With or without ERIC, the students at St. Nicholas Avenue Community School in Worcester, Massachusetts, working under Robert T. O'Connor, have been "metricating" their neighborhood. They have made metric street signs and put some in place. They have sold metric sticks and Celsius thermometers. They have walked a kilometer, run 50-meter dashes, cooked metrically during an overnight camping trip. They have composed a metric song, put together an electric metric-prefix board, and even been on a radio talk show where they talked—yes—about metrics.

If *your* kids are into metrics or want to be, perhaps they can talk to local business people and find out what products selling in the United States are already marked metrically. Auto parts houses, drugstores, and kitchenware departments are good places to start.

But perhaps the students with whom you spend a third of your life are only tyros in the confusing world of numbers. Sandra Click, corrective math teacher in Kimberlin Elementary School, Garland, Texas, says that many children have difficulty in understanding abstract numerals.

To help them, she uses 10 empty potato-chip canisters covered with bright contact paper. Each has a felt numeral from zero to nine glued to the outside. Small plastic objects—animals, cars, airplanes, dolls—in quantities that correspond with the numbers are placed inside the canisters.

As each numeral is introduced, the individual child pronounces it, traces the felt numeral with his or her finger, then opens the canister and counts its contents. Or the child may count out the proper number of objects to place inside. (Reward for accurate responses: getting to play with the toys for a few minutes.)

Mrs. Click uses the canisters to teach various math concepts, such as odd and even, number sequence, place value. When not in use, the canisters provide a decorative number line in the classroom.

These days many students have computers in their pockets in addition to such other necessities as car keys, sugarless gum, and Afro combs. Even so, Ralph Postiglione at South Senior High School in Great Neck, New York, finds his students receptive to memorizing the rules of divisibility. They go like this:

1. A number is divisible by 2 if the last digit is divisible by 2. Example: 68*4*.
2. A number is divisible by 3 if the *sum* of the digits is divisible by 3. Example: 123.
3. A number is divisible by 4 if the last two digits are divisible by 4. Example: 1*64*.
4. A number is divisible by 5 if it ends in 0 or 5. Example: 67*5*.
5. A number is divisible by 8 if the last three digits are divisible by 8. Example: 17*328*.

Mr. Postiglione suggests making up an exercise of various numbers to test and illustrate the rules—which might fascinate friends of any age. Try them out during a lull at the next potluck.

At Warren Township High School in Gurnee, Illinois, chemistry teacher Natalie Foote Tiernan has evolved a technique for combating some problems that make chemistry a difficult subject—fear of math, low reading ability, poor attendance. Mrs. Tiernan calls her idea Learning Activity Packs (LAPS).

The LAPS, one for each chapter of

the chemistry text, contain an average of 20 pages that include illustrated summaries of class lectures, questions on audiovisual materials, relevant crossword puzzles, extra credit reading suggestions, and instructions for more difficult individual labs. The cover of each LAP lists dates for class activities and LAP activities. Other dates are marked SOT (Student's Own Time). On SOT days, students work in groups of their own choice. Some do extra-credit labs. Some go to the library. Some finish French or math or other assignments.

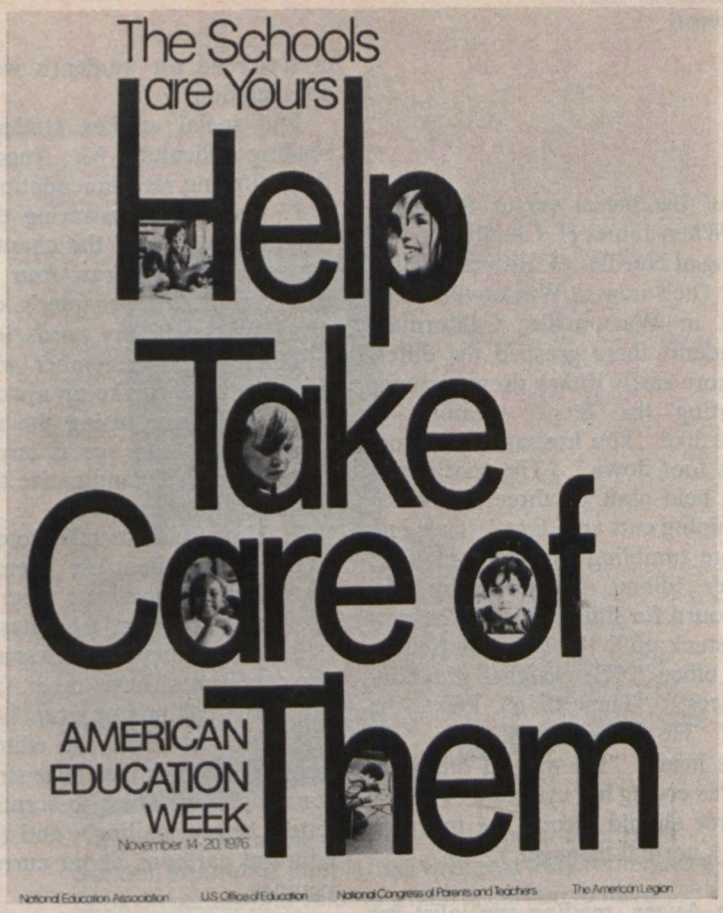
On exam day, the names of one-third of the students are drawn in a lottery. These students must hand in their LAPS. Others *may* hand theirs in for special evaluation but not for grades. Mrs. Tiernan makes three records of her opinions: one for the LAP, one for the parents, and one for her files.

She doesn't return exams until all absentees have made them up. (She does, however, distribute grades.) Peer pressure encourages students to come to school.

Mrs. Tiernan finds that this individual approach appeals to the students, gives them some selectivity, and develops personal responsibility.

As noted, for many, chemistry ain't easy. Neither is the study of French. To keep her French classes at North Farmington High School in Farmington, Michigan, from being discouraged and to enliven proceedings in general, Susan Melissa Neal throws things. A fuzzy red ball, for one. She mentions a French subject. Then, instead of calling a student's name, she tosses him or her the ball, and he or she throws it back while giving the verb form that corresponds to the subject or pronoun Miss Neal has given. Or Miss Neal says a number, and the person hit with the ball (very softly) sings out the one that precedes or follows it, or that is two more—whatever has been decided on.

Idioms are especially likely to pop up in English classes during discus-



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sions of the literal versus the figurative. When James H. Chadbourn was teaching at Needles (California) High School (he's now at Watsonville High School in Watsonville, California), his students there grasped the difference more easily if they drew cartoons illustrating the literal meaning of phrases like "The husband could not put his foot down." (The foot is tied to and held aloft by three balloons.) "It's raining cats and dogs." (Cats and dogs are tumbling from rain clouds.)

Other idioms suggested by Mr. Chadbourn for illustration: "The new girl is stuck up." "Dad was all tied up at the office." "He weighed the consequences." "They didn't know the ropes." "He was over the hill." "He lost his head." "He was all thumbs." "She was crying her eyes out." (Those last three should inspire the macabre in every normal teenager.)

John Auger, reading specialist for Stevens T. Mason Junior High School in Waterford, Michigan, emphasizes the importance of the "Second R" in student comprehension. He believes that students can best understand and retain what they have been hearing in lectures and discussions by writing it down. He also believes that in writing, quantity can produce quality. (In other words, writing is learned by writing.) What counts is capturing an idea and getting it on paper. The mechanics of writing can be worked on later.

Mr. Auger believes in daily writing practice in both social studies and language arts classes. Such practice can be informal—notes to friends, listing the names of everyone in the room, analyses of abstract pictures (drawn, perhaps, by the writer or by classmates). Eventually a daily journal plus notes on the lectures may be challenging, especially if students realize what they are attempting.

Teacher comments on student work, Mr. Auger emphasizes, are much more important than just a grade or, worse, nothing at all. "You're getting better" and "I like this" suggest that the teacher has read the student's work with appreciation.

For social studies students with reading difficulties, Mr. Auger makes the following recommendations:

1. Instead of answering the questions at the end of the chapter, have the students (a) draw four cartoons that capture the chapter's contents, (b) jot down 10 key words/ideas that will help them remember what they have read, (c) make up a word maze on graph paper, using the same 10 words/ideas, and see if anyone can solve it, and (d) summarize the chapter in 25 or fewer words.
2. Have students take notes during lectures and then use them during tests. This will motivate them to organize and summarize the notes.
3. If students use newspapers for current events, have them (a) write the stories behind important headlines, (b) write letters to the editor about matters on which they have strong personal opinions (best to scrutinize the letters before mailing), and (c) draw editorial cartoons about current happenings.
4. Using a map of the country or state being studied, have students (a) write the directions for getting from point "a" to point "z" and (b) write the name of the area being studied and for each of its letters, list cities, towns, rivers, and lakes that begin with the same letter.
5. Have students interpret history subjectively by (a) writing about what might have been one of the worst times to live in and (b) interviewing the oldest persons with whom they are acquainted and writing their impressions of what life was like when those persons were youngsters.

As for language arts classes, Mr. Auger suggests the following imaginative topics for creative writing assignments:

1. The day the Water People took over the world.
2. It's hell being a snake.
3. If I could make a movie, it would be about. . . .
4. I was an automobile owned by a teenager.
5. The day my fingernails dropped off.
6. The flood in the Alka Seltzer factory.

Sometimes it's fun to work with a pal.

1. Write a story without punctuation. Let someone else do the punctuating.
2. After writing a story, erase every fifth word. Let someone else fill in the blanks.

Well! Having made all these assignments, how is a body going to survive the inundation of papers? Here are some Auger solutions:

1. Check and comment on all papers but grade only every fourth one.
2. Have the students choose which papers they wish graded and which they merely wish credit for.
3. After three papers have been turned in and given back, let the student rework the one he or she thinks is best and return it for a grade.

Now we come to art, a subject that often requires teacher creativity just to get some materials for the students to be creative with. Joan Mary Macey of the Binghamton, New York, School System, finds a spate of old magazines valuable in several ways. For starters, she has the elementary school children search for and tear out pictures of people in action—fishing, gardening, playing games, cooking. Then, from the pictures, the children cut out various body parts to be reassembled in new, composite characters, some funny haha, some funny peculiar.

Those who find front facial views may cut them in half vertically, paste one half to white paper, and then draw in the second half. The original half gives excellent guidance as to proportion, feature placement, and shading.

A magazine-cover face, printed on heavier paper, can be marked off in half-inch strips, vertically, horizontally, or diagonally, then cut. The cut strips, carefully kept in order, can be pasted on a black background, letting every other strip jog out one-half inch, thus producing a fascinating distortion, a new way to look at something familiar. This technique also works well with old photographs and calendars.

Display the results. "What do you see?" might be the heading. Miss Macey suggests letting students arrange the displays, changing them often.

Now, having struggled valiantly to make information obtainable, logical, and palatable, the teacher must eventually give some kind of test. How can the teacher make the tests really worthwhile?

Veryl G. Douglass, intermediate science teacher, who feels that review sessions before tests are advantageous, particularly for underachievers, recommends the following two techniques:

Question Me an Answer. The teacher offers an answer to the class. The class then volunteers questions to match the answer. Since there may be several possible answers for each question, students can become involved and creative.

Mystery Packet. The class, divided into teams, draws lots to see which team answers first, second, etc. Five manila envelopes, each lettered A, B, C, D, or E and each containing 20 separate questions, are displayed. Each team in turn chooses an envelope, and the teacher pulls a question from it. The team that made the selection has 30 seconds to answer. If they can't, the question goes to a team that has a hand up. After the review, the teacher writes all flunked questions and their answers on the chalkboard for everyone to copy.

Score is kept of the contest, and the winning team tastes the thrill of victory—and maybe pizza if they are feeling sociable.

Then there is the test proper. Walter Lener, professor of biology at Nassau Community College, Garden City, New York, feels that the basic purpose of a test (to show what a student has learned) can be augmented by including a "bonus question." His students know that as a part of each test they may make up and answer a question. This gives them an opportunity to display knowledge that they may have concentrated on but that the test has not otherwise touched.

Dr. Lener suggests giving extra credit for the bonus question. He admits the answers may be difficult to score; take much more time than multiple choice, for example; and vary in quality and quantity. But they give students a chance to shine in at least one area. □

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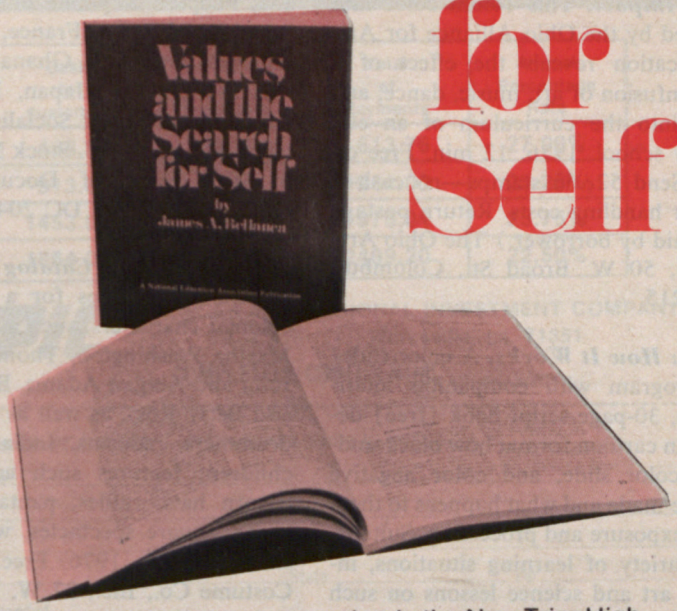

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Bicentennial Catalog No. B76. Illustrates costumes for a full cast of colonial characters, such as George and Martha Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John and Abigail Adams, Ben Franklin, and Betsy Ross, as well as minute men, drummers, redcoats, Indians, Pilgrims, children; features such accessories as tricorn hats, ruffles, pantalets, powder horns, square spectacles, wigs, walking sticks, swords. 1976. Free. New York Costume Co., Inc., 27 W. Hubbard St., Chicago 60610.

A Nation of Learners. The education scene from Colonial times to the present, traced by noted authors. Additional short features relate to the quaint side of education. Illustrated. 1976. 185 pp. $4.05. Stock No. 017-080-1540-4. Supt. of Documents, U.S. Govt. Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.

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Catalogs and Bibliographies

Bibliography of Law-Related Curriculum Materials: Annotated (Second Edition). Describes textbooks, curriculum kits and guides, journals and newsletters, and books that can serve as valuable reference or supplementary materials. 1976. 116 pp. Single copies are available for $1 each; 2-25 copies, $2 each. Special Committee on Youth Education, American Bar Assn., 1155 E. 60th St., Chicago 60637.

Consumer Education Bibliography. Contains 325 abstracts of curriculum-instructional materials on such consumer issues as money and shopping, insurance, taxes, cars, clothing, food and nutrition, housing and home management, and health care. 1976. 146 pp. $4. Natl. Multimedia Center for Adult Education, Dept. of Adult Continuing Education, 848 Valley Rd., Montclair State College, Upper Montclair, NJ 07043.

NCEMMH Catalog — Audiovisual Materials and Publications in Special Education. Lists items to assist a wide range of individuals with learning handicaps. 1976. 19 pp. Free. National Center on Educational Media and Materials for the Handicapped, Information Services, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH 43210.

1976-1977 Children's Book Council Materials. Describes materials useful to children, teachers, librarians, and parents in the great adventure of reading. 1976. 19 pp. Send stamped (24¢) self-addressed, size 10 envelope. The Children's Book Council, Inc., 67 Irving Pl., New York 10003.

A Resource Manual of Information on Educating the Gifted and Talented. Up-to-date resources include directories of federal, regional, and state agencies. Contains an appendix of film resources and a bibliography. 1976. 90 pp. $3.95. Stock No. 116. ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children, Council for Exceptional Children, 1920 Association Dr., Reston, VA

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Sex Discrimination in Athletics. A list of articles, ERIC publications, and federal documents dealing with sex discrimination in athletics. 1976. 6 pp. Free. Library, Florida Technological University, Box 25000, Orlando, FL 32816.

Communications Skills

The Word Game: Improving Communications. Tips on vocabulary building, along with interesting discussions about words. 1975. 41 pp. 50¢ (35¢ to Phi Delta Kappa members); payment must accompany orders. Phi Delta Kappa, 8th and Union, Box 789, Bloomington, IN 47401.

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Economic Education Experiences of Enterprising Teachers. Vol. 13. Forty-seven award-winning classroom experiences used by teachers at the primary, intermediate, junior and senior high school, and college levels. 1976. 113 pp. $2. Joint Council on Economic Education, 1212 Ave. of the Americas, New York 10036.

The Economics of Professional Team Sports. Explains how basic economic principles are at work in the sports industry. Includes a "Teaching About" section that allows the material to be used either as a series of economics lessons or as a minicourse. 1976. 21 pp. $1.50. Joint Council on Economic Education, 1212 Ave. of the Americas, New York 10036.

Motor Vehicle Facts and Figures '76. The statistical story of cars, trucks, and buses in America—their production, registration, usage, ownership, and economics. 1976. 105 pp. Single copies free. Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Assn., Statistics Dept., 320 New Center Bldg., Detroit 48202.

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An Everyday Guide to the Metric System. A guide by SRA that gives accurate and complete information for everyday use of the metric system and provides activities for the classroom. 1976. 63 pp. $1.25. Associated Press Books, 50 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 10020.

Metrics for Beginners. Primary No. 522. Eight large full-color study posters with teaching guide and suggested activities for pupils. 1976. $4.95. The Instructor Publications, Inc., Dansville, NY 14437.

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Scholarships—Financial Aid

Don't Miss Out. Lists tuition assistance opportunities and groups them according to major academic fields as well as sponsorship. 1976. $1. (Educators may request, on letterhead, up to five review copies, enclosing a 50¢ postage and handling charge for each copy.) Octameron Associates, Box 3437, Alexandria, VA 22302.

Scholarships Available to Black Students, American Indian Students, and Spanish-Speaking Students. A revised, comprehensive list of financial aid sources for minorities. 1976. 39¢ in postage stamps (no cash). Pasadena Community Service Commission, 717 N. Lake Ave., Pasadena, CA 91104.

Selected List of Educational Opportunities for Minorities and Women. A compilation of student financial aid programs that includes a sampling of graduate and undergraduate scholarship and fellowship programs. Gives brief descriptions of federal programs as well as ideas for pursuing financial assistance from state and other sources. 1976. Free. Bureau of Postsecondary Education, Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, DC 20202.

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101 Activities for Building More Effective School-Community Involvement. Presents tested, practical, no-cost, easy ways to develop more creative and positive educational partnerships. 1976. 78 pp. $4 plus 50¢ mailing fee. Home and School Institute, Trinity College, Washington, DC 20017.

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MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

Evaluating Materials

This feature is prepared by P. Kenneth Komoski, executive director, EPIE (Educational Products Information Exchange) Institute. For further information about materials and equipment, write to EPIE Institute, 475 Riverside Drive, New York 10027.

If you are anything like the 14,000 classroom teachers who, as selectors and users of educational products, have been helping us at EPIE during the last year or so, you'd probably like to know more about how to be an effective selector of instructional materials. Given the limited time that you have to perform the task, what can you do to see that the most appropriate materials get into your classroom?

Here are some things to keep in mind about products advertised as instructional materials:

- First, even though you are the consumer at whom publishers aim their advertising and for whom they prime their salespeople, you should regularly remind yourself that the ultimate consumers of instructional materials are students and that as consumers they usually have no choice and no voice in selecting the materials. (EPIE's 14,000 teacher confidants tell us that 90 to 95 percent of the time they spend instructing students involves the use of one sort of instructional material or another.)

Selection committees often pay little attention to the only thing that really matters with educational materials: how helpful they will be to students. You can act as consumer advocate for your students.

- Second, study the goals and objectives of the material (the "instructional protein" of the product) to see if the producer has stated them clearly enough so that you or any interested member of the school community, including your students, can readily understand them. Only then can you judge whether the objectives are "a good fit" with your own and your school's goals and objectives.

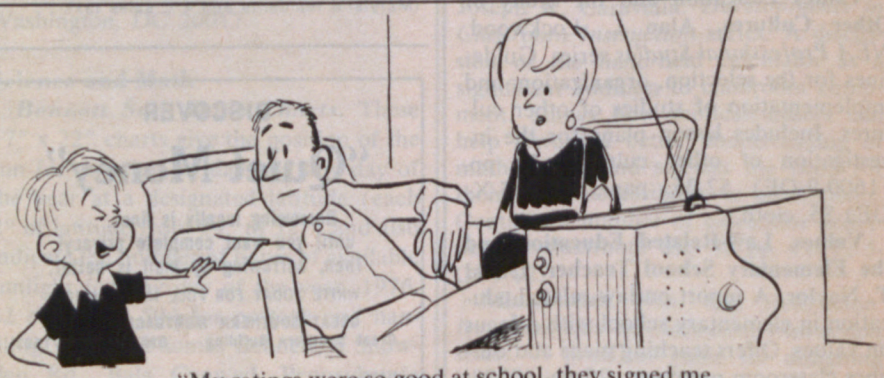
If teachers, principals, parents, and students all clearly understood in advance the specific goals and objectives of the instructional materials to be used in the classroom, a great many problems would be alleviated.

- Third, check the scope and sequence of the content of the material to see if they adequately reflect the specified goals and objectives. Particularly note if the sequence of learning activities in the material reflects what the producer emphasized in the goals and activities.

By doing this you can discover the extent to which the material contains a well-balanced instructional diet and the extent to which you are going to have to supplement its learning activities.

- Fourth, ask yourself these questions about the learning activities mentioned in the material. What do they assume you are able to do as a teacher? More important, what do they expect your students to be able to do as learners?

Also ask yourself, Will these activities result in my students' actually



"My ratings were so good at school, they signed me for another eight weeks next summer."

learning the specified goals and objectives of the material or will they only result in the class's *covering* those objectives? This question is crucial, because many local and state materials selection committees have to spend so much of their time making sure that the materials they select will "cover the curriculum" (or being absolutely sure they don't cover, or even mention, certain topics or words) that they seldom attend to the problem of whether the teacher will have time to teach what the materials do cover.

- Fifth, check to see if the materials contain progress and achievement tests that adequately reflect the learning objectives *emphasized in the learning activities.*

When tests fail to cover objectives that the learning activities actually treat but rather reflect objectives emphasized in a producer's statement of objectives, they are misleading to teachers and unfair to students.

- Sixth, find out if the material was developed with the aid of direct feedback from learners or if it has been recently revised and improved on the basis of such feedback. Request evidence of the use of learner-based revision.

Very few selection committees bother to determine if a producer has sought learner feedback in developing or revising materials. (In fact, most producers never revise materials on the basis of learner feedback but simply repackage or "update" them by adding new, untested content.)

- Seventh, if you are fortunate enough to find a material that checks out well on these points, you should then be sure to check it out with your students. You can do this by asking a few learners or the whole class to work through portions of the material. Be sure to ask them how well they understand the specifics of what they are reading as they go through the material.

By keeping these seven points in mind as you select materials, you can perform an important consumer advocate role for those "ultimate educational consumers"—your students. □

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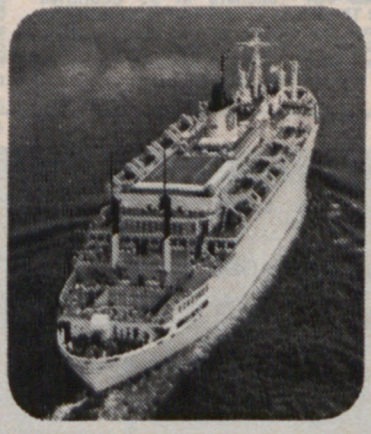

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